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Space Time Collapse II: Community Futurisms
Works compiled by Rasheedah Phillips

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Space-Time Collapse II: **COMMUNITY FUTURISMS**



Black Quantum Futurism

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Time Pockets



Camae Ayewa

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lost in time maps

North Philly String Theory

before the condos went up

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section 8 time capsules

forever time shift & section 8 collapse

The future of housing culture

eminent futures

eminent erasure & memory rebuild

before

neighborhood collapse

high rise futures

Demolishing

the past and rebuilding memory

The grid has already been set, a vortex of looping events. *Time pockets* are places that exist in a looping or perpetual wave of discord, often attracting systemic takeover—government housing agencies, contractors and developers, gentrification. These entities create a map of communal living in which the lines and boundaries are always drawn and its impressions forever shape the landscape through memory migration. This map is usually laid out according to developers and government actors' interpretations and capitalists' goals and intentions. We notice the ever-changing landscape and identify how poor people are historically denied agency when it comes to ownership and whatever the future vision/tradition that the land shall hold.

What remains of a neighborhood after it has been gentrified? What memories do the land and trees hold once the buildings are destroyed?

I lived in the same Section 8 housing community of Washington Park in Aberdeen, Maryland for most of my life. The land was washed and marked for me before I was even born. My *great great* grandmother lived across the street from where I would soon spend my entire childhood and young adult life. My *great* grandmother sold take-out soul food platters from her apartment— something that proved to be the heartbeat and pulse of a community forced by necessity to rely on each other. By the time I was born, or old enough to remember, the economy of the neighborhood was something that every member of the community had a chance to participate in— regardless of age, sex, or class. I look back to my youth marveling at the fact that many of us had creative business ideas, and that we could sell perfume or popcorn out the back of an apartment window. We were just following a tradition that was built throughout the land. A legacy that was wired into the vibrations of the neighborhood.

I grew up in a community of 98% black people. My neighborhood had a bad reputation for drugs, crime, and violence. And even though I knew people on drugs or involved in crime, there was never fear because a certain type of respect had been established.

In my neighborhood, many food delivery and taxi cab drivers refused to come into the housing complex. But every weekend we had the Fish Man yelling "Fresh fish for sale!" in each housing court. We never felt like it was a problem that certain services didn't come because we had the Candy Apple Lady. We had a man who fixed all the children's' bicycles. We had a man who was the neighborhood taxi. Many folks had stores in their homes where you could get anything you wanted or needed. These were the building blocks on how to learn how to respect and support each other economically.



Brewerytown-Sharswood Community Civic Association Community Unity Day. Credit: BQF (2016)

On many occasions when you sat down for dinner there were other kids at the table with you. I remember growing up sharing many meals with families in the neighborhood because it was an unwritten rule to take care of each other. Together we took on issues of police harassment. We took on issues of people coming into our neighborhood to cheat, steal and lie – restorative justice. In my book of poetry called *Fetish Bones* (2016) I speak to this life, calling it “a new happiness.” Looking back, I can recognize that I was experiencing a utopia. But back then my sense of it was clouded by all the stuff people who didn’t live in the neighborhood would say. I didn’t realize I would never experience another like it.

A utopia only seen by the blue blackness of eyes wet and in control of the economics of our own tears/waters.



Sharswood Community Memorial (2017)

It also didn't occur to me that I was experiencing the reflection of what so many other Black and Brown communities were going through in the 80s with high imprisonment rates, and the reverberations of the war on drugs echoing across many of our communities. We have identified that communities that look alike and share historical tragedy are going through the same metamorphosis across space and time. In the present, low-income communities are feeling the wave of gentrification and inadequate housing - particularly Black women and single mothers.

This is our home, we are rooted here dig up the dirt study the bones.

The experience at Community Futures Lab was a direct correlation. The effects of the riots in the 1960s on Columbia Avenue (now called Cecil B. Moore) are evident just walking through the neighborhood. The effects from a growing corporation disguised as a university can be readily seen. This reflection ripples throughout North Philly's historically Black and Indigenous communities. The voices of the residents all echo and vibrate the same sentiments. They are saying: *we are being pushed out by inadequate living conditions, poor landlord politics, and we're expected to be thankful for it.* Housing Authorities and landlords expect a low-income community to flourish while doing the bare minimum to care for that community, because they're devoting most of their energy towards creating a police state.

These are inventive times we're living in. One has to rely on ingenuity, innovation and discovery to hold onto one's home and traditions. Evidence of the creativity required bleeds through the archives when investigating the pasts, presents, and futures of our communities and neighborhoods.

Community Futures Lab continues the legacy of artists, community

members, and community attorneys coming together to bring innovation and art as a component of social justice to strengthen a community. It works within the legacy of pre-Civil rights community-based artist Dox Thrash. Dox Thrash was a brilliant artist based in Sharswood with a home at 23rd and Columbia Ave (Cecil B. Moore) who used art for community building and futurism. Shaykh Muhammad, a prominent Muslim activist alleged by police to have incited the 1964 Columbia Ave riots, purchased the Dox Thrash home and opened the African-Asian Cultural Center there. The descendants of Muhammad, along with local activists and a group of preservationists from Penn, continue to fight to preserve the home, which has been threatened with demolition and sheriff's sale, and no support from the City to preserve the historic home. Murals dedicated to Dox Thrash were destroyed on two occasions; ironically by the Department of Housing and Urban Development when it was located on the side of his deteriorating house, and most recently the Dox Thrash mural at 16th Street and Girard Avenue was about 3/4 covered by luxury condos.

What happens to the memory of a city when you change the name of a street? What happens to a neighborhood when you demolish 1,300 homes? What happens to a community that is continually pushed out by a growing university? What happens when public art, monuments, and murals, depicting Black people and Black historical events are constantly destroyed and erased all over Philadelphia, then replaced by condominiums and other luxury housing?

I asked these questions to community members and it always comes back to memory, and the fact that community members feel that forces beyond their control are trying to rewrite and erase the legacy and mechanics of their neighborhood.

In Black Quantum Futurism, we understand that this kind of knowledge is powerful as a means of skill-sharing and engaging collective ideas. We embrace practical and everyday realities. Developing innovative ways to address seemingly ordinary issues is important to us, so we host DIY time travel and housing futures workshops. While exploring alternate temporalities and social constructs, we learn to navigate this one. We trust that our hunger for knowledge of self can be satisfied within our own communities—that we can learn valuable information from our neighbors by sharing stories and memories. We affirm that the community members are the best directors of the futures of their own neighborhoods. We investigate that our oral traditions are healing technologies and need to be shared to inspire the continuation of our past. We channel the impact of creating quantum time capsules and DIY time machines to envision a future where we see ourselves wherever we want to be. Our aim is to take



Free Black Women's Library at Community Futures Lab (2016)



Senior citizens at Norman Blumberg apt. learn gardening. Credit: Dominic Ligato, Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA (1971)

agency and arm community members with the tools to continue to shape a future they want to be a part of. At Community Futures Lab we provided tools for how to break oppressive linear constructs in communities.

In Sharswood, there was an outpouring of residents wanting to archive their stories of futures, pasts, and present realities. The residents expressed the importance of these stories being recorded and the fact the some felt there was a fatalistic timeline on these stories, the feeling like these stories could die with them. Entangled histories and temporalities etched upon the map of our lives. This is the anthropology of the consciousness of a neighborhood and of a people armed and empowered to take back the land and cultivate a tradition of growth and wellbeing. Rooted in a once

self-sustaining community that could create economic capital with each other outside of the gaze of capitalism, making way for more equitable and sustainable communities.

Our lives archives by our own hand only we/us can touch grandmothers face and see/hear her in the community garden.

A personal goal would be to create Community Futures Labs across the world that inform and act as a resource for housing and other basic human rights like access to clean water and safety and recognizing the importance of connecting community members and advocates that are working against major developers and for the perseverance of history, culture and futurism in neighborhoods/communities. It is important to me for Community Futures Labs to serve as examples of how to fight against the erasure of our communities and neighborhood by archiving our past, present, and future stories, and discovering creative ways to document the changes in our neighborhoods and hold actors accountable for the changes when they are outside of the community's determinations.

A neighborhood is now a dance away from investors.

Communal, Quantum & Afrofutures: Time & Memory in North Philly



Rasheedah Phillips

To think about or refer to the future often involves a spatialization of time, a tendency known in linguistics as space-time mapping. We easily tie time into space, for example, when we speak of the past and future as being near or far. We tend to conceptualize the future as being in front of us and the past behind us, and often as destinations or in terms of distance, i.e. "returning to the past."

In our space-time mapping of the future, however, rarely do we take account of where the future is, *who* has access to it, its plurality, and whether we are all accelerating at the same rate and pace into that future. We seldom think about how gender, race, and income shift or limits access to the future and even the past. The time dimension plays a daily and crucial role in how people —particularly Black and poor people—are valued, treated, punished, or underserved by and within society. Marginalized, low-income and predominantly Black communities in America tend to suffer from time poverty and temporal discrimination, where individuals in the community are poor in the commodity of time to be able to dream about, plan for, and envision the future, instead of planning how to get through the next day, week, or month under the constant threats of displacement from our homes and gentrification in our communities. Sociologist Jeremy Rifkin explains that the consequence of the linear progress narrative being applied to an oppressed people keeps them "confined in a narrow temporal band, unable to anticipate and plan for their future, [...] powerless to affect their political fate."

In this essay, I will consider the layers of time, temporality, and the implications of space involved in displacement through a redevelopment project in a neighborhood in North Philadelphia currently known as Sharswood. Highlighting "Community Futures Lab," a socially engaged afrofuturist oral history / future and art project,¹ I reflect on how the times of gentrification and redevelopment taking place in marginalized communities work to condense time, disrupt communal temporalities, erase public memory, and challenges access to the temporal domain of the future. Using oral histories and futures interviews with current and former Sharswood residents, newspaper articles, and archival materials, I will consider how people from the neighborhood integrate the time of redevelopment, displacement, and gentrification into the pre-established temporal dynamics of the community, including the communal historical memory and the shared idea of the future(s). In experimenting with various methodologies, I make use of data generated from explorations Black Quantum Futurism Collective made with residents at Community Futures Lab through the gathering of oral histories and oral futures interviews. Through the CFL project, we interviewed residents about layers and intersections of past/present/future in the context of housing and community, and most specifically in the context of North Philadelphia and in the Sharswood neighborhood.

The essay makes use of archival materials to further explore the communal temporalities and enactment of Black Quantum Futurism praxis in carrying out this ongoing exploration. In doing so, this essay continues to explore the inquiries posed in the previous volume, *Space-Time Collapse Volume I* (2016), such as: how can Black communities take back or "reclaim" control of our own time? How do we access and take back control of our communal memory? How do we create the temporal-

¹ "Gentrification is antiblack, anti-indigenous time and space making" - research note by CFL Intern Chiekh Athj. A note on word choice: Much of the essay could be spent on defining terms such as gentrification, redevelopment, future, community, and other terms. I do not wish to take up critical space with these definitions and contested language but instead will take for granted a common definition and understanding of what these words mean and hope that the reader will trust my sincere and critical engagement with these terms.

spatial frameworks needed to map our return to our own futures? In exploring these questions, I acknowledge that these inquiries are dynamic, ongoing, and being actively lived out through civic and cultural engagement in North Philly. Time within this project, at every level, is treated as durational, layered, and non-linear.

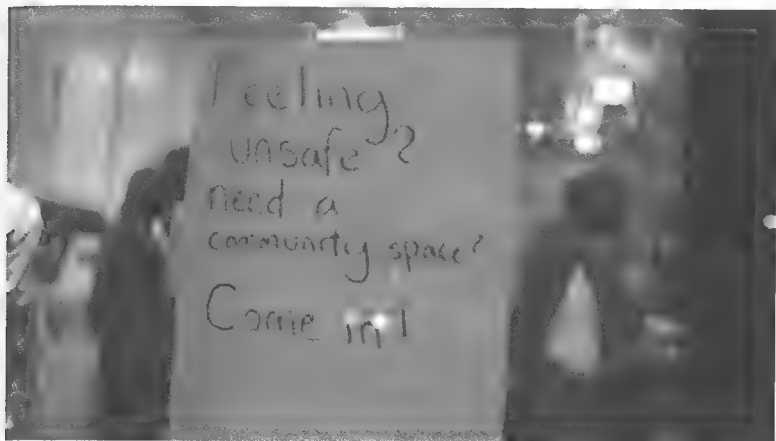
Finally, I will briefly highlight directions and hopes for the future(s), including legal advocacy tools that work to extend, preserve, expand, and protect communal temporal landscapes, such as increased length of notice requirements for low-income tenants at risk of losing affordable housing, and access to zoning information that helps communities plan for their long-term futures. In closing, afrofuturism and Black Quantum Futurism theory and practice are considered as tools and technologies for activating healthy and hopeful alternative temporalities in marginalized Black communities living under temporal oppression, temporal-spatial poverty, and persistent temporal-spatial discrimination and colonization of the futures of our communities.

Background and Lens

Community Futurisms: Time & Memory in North Philly is a collaborative art, preservation, and creative research project exploring the impact of redevelopment, gentrification, and displacement within North Philly through the themes of oral histories/futures, memories, temporalities, and afrofuturism. Community Futurisms projects seek to create space for marginalized community members to participate in the creation of space and time within their neighborhoods. Community Futurisms aims to facilitate a deeper understanding of the dynamics, rhythms, temporalities, memories, histories, and ideas for a shared future(s) that define an intentional community.

From May 2016-April 2017, Black Quantum Futurism (BQF) launched the first iteration of the project, *Community Futures Lab* (CFL) - a pop-up community space, gallery, resource and zine library, workshop space, and recording booth, with critical project support from *A Blade of Grass*, a New

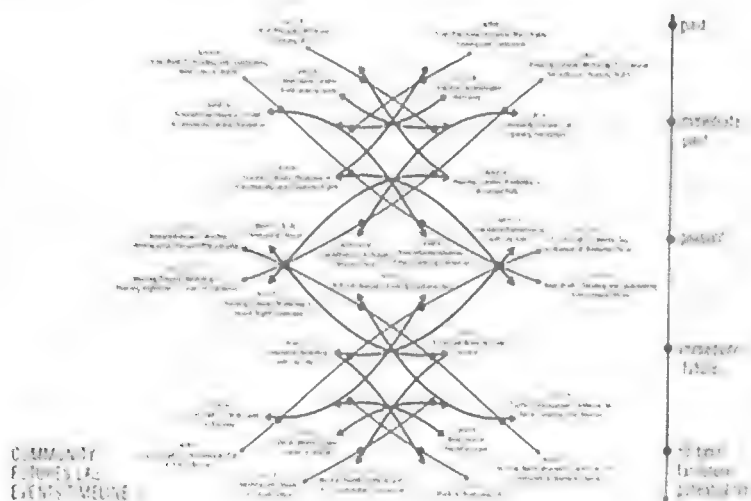
York City-based foundation that funds socially engaged art projects. CFL worked with residents of the Sharswood neighborhood to attempt to dismantle the prevalent, contemporary narrative about the neighborhood that paints it as poor, crime-ridden, and without historical significance, to envision and create alternative futures, and to recover and archive some of the lesser-known histories of the neighborhood through oral history, mapping, and artmaking.



Community Futures Lab in North Philadelphia. Credit: Chet Pancake for Queer Genius Film (2017)

Over the course of the year, CFL was located in a storefront at 2204 Ridge Avenue, directly in the heart of redevelopment and a few blocks away from where the public housing low and high rises were demolished, on an avenue once known as a successful business district with a rich legacy of jazz and art. BQF used the space as an experimental safe(r) space for dreaming and envisioning the future(s), and for its accessibility to people living in a neighborhood that has been largely cut off from resources and opportunities for several decades. CFL was positioned as a space where it was safe to speculate and imagine alternative futures, and to preserve and remember the history of that particular neighborhood, while it was undergoing a redevelopment process that threatened to erase the Black historical past and threatens to strip people of their agency in the

future. CFL provided a space for community members to participate in dynamic conversations and critical dialogue about housing, displacement, gentrification, and related issues through the lens of afrofuturism, instead of being merely passive recipients of information about those topics and being confined by narratives and languages of despair and crisis. It was particularly critical to have an afrofuturistic space to speculate and imagine alternative futures and to preserve and remember the history of that community, as the neighborhood underwent a transformation that created tangible circumstances of erasure of the past and a stripping away of agency for the future.



While CFL was open, BQF held over 30 workshops and events separately and collaboratively with other community-based organizations and artists, primarily utilizing a concept we called a “walk-in workshop.” BQF developed the concept of the walk-in workshop to allow people to come in and out at their leisure without the pressure of having to attend the entire workshop. Anyone could walk in at any point and participate, and the workshop facilitators would respect their time and temporality in terms of how long and in what ways they chose to participate. This

called for structuring workshops so that time was not the primary constraint on activities or primary concern in structuring activities, and such that facilitators found ways to bring people into the discussion at any point in the workshop. Aside from events, CFL had walk-in hours nearly seven days a week, usually from noon until the late evening. During open hours, neighborhood residents and community members were able to engage in a variety of ways that could fit their comfort level and time – people could stop in, stay as long as they wanted or needed, pick up legal and community resources, participate or not participate in activities and workshops, browse the library, listen to music, do an interview, and otherwise be in the space on their terms.

One of our recurring workshops was a series called Housing Futures, which provided information on various topics related to housing rights for low-income Philadelphians, as well as the opportunity to provide critical feedback on housing policies under consideration by the City of Philadelphia during the time CFL was open. As the previous Managing Attorney of the Housing unit at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, which provides free legal services to and advocacy on behalf of low-income Philadelphians, I directed a number of policy advocacy initiatives surrounding the Sharswood revitalization project and previously provided legal representation to tenants in the community, giving me direct knowledge of community members' legal and policy concerns. I utilized a community lawyering approach in engaging residents in the neighborhood, opening up a new avenue of communication and outreach combined with legal information, using art, writing, and music. For example, through CFL and Housing Futures workshops, residents were able to get directly involved in a policy campaign to increase access to justice for low-income renters that eventually resulted in Philadelphia City Council dedicating \$500,000 in its budget toward legal representation for low-income tenants facing eviction. This program recently became permanent as Philadelphia became the 5th jurisdiction in the country to introduce and pass legislation providing a right to an attorney for low-income renters facing eviction.

At CFL, one of the methodologies that we used was oral history - and

what we call "oral futures" - interviews. With significant input from CFL interns, BQF developed oral history / oral futures interview questions from a pre-existing survey called Time & Memory Survey, which is part of a long-term ethnographic, creative research project exploring time, memory, and temporality as experienced by people and communities identifying as Black or African-American. The oral futures questions were a way of having community members speak futures into existence by envisioning and recalling what was, would, could, or will be, and by creating records of such. As displaced Africans in America, the story wave does not carry as far as it did on our ancestral lands because of the ways our communities are attacked. Our personal and communal stories often travel within smaller borders and closed-in territories and are often tied into the memory of a building or land. If we are pushed off that land, the stories disperse. Oral history, and what we call "oral futures" in the Community Futurisms projects, reclaims Afrodiasporan oral traditions.

Oral historians (or oral futurists) were self-selected, choosing on their own to walk into CFL and be interviewed for the project after significant outreach and advertisement about the project in the area. We ensured that CFL was consistently open during the daytime and some evening and weekend hours to allow people to come in at times that best suited them, understanding, as some of the participants pointed out, that residents had little time to spare to contribute to the project given other obligations on their time. As one resident put it:

Ms. T: I have other things, I have other things on my mind like my doctor's appointment, and see they doing a survey on me. And plus, I got a machine at home, so I don't think about that, I be thinking about this machine that I gotta get home to. And these kids. But I like the community, I'd like to come closer to a community.

Residents, former residents, and business owners were provided with a gift card for their participation and connected to additional housing resources and social services upon request. Interview questions focused on topics and themes of housing, neighborhood history, futures of the neighborhood, personal futures, and more. Some interviews happened

informally while at workshops or during spontaneous conversations. Workshops encouraged the sharing of experiences and narratives through artmaking and tools such as housing journey maps and poetry writing workshops to honor the multiple ways that people store and encode memories:

Ms. T: I write them down. I like to write them down. I like to write. I have a pretty handwriting when I get down to write. Like today, I'm talking to you, I put it in my book what I did today, and you know I got a book about this big. And I write one page at least a day. And I go through the whole book.

At CFL workshops we regularly explored or created different kinds of maps: quantum event maps, housing journey maps, sonic maps, and communal memory maps. The quantum event map developed by BQF mimics African and Asian diasporic cultural practices and perspectives on time and space, bringing together the micro (or quantum) events that like to "happen in time together" to construct future moments/events or re-examine past moments/events as individuals or as groups and communities. Through this method of mapping, event memory (both future and past) is not attached to a specific calendar date or clock time, and memories are not formed regarding a specific date or time. Time becomes something remembered, not something that defines and predates the creation of the memory. In our workshops, we have groups create communal quantum event maps that allow them to struggle through some of the ways in which a community constructs communal time around a past, future, or present event, composed of diverse and intersecting temporal rhythms and other event textures and features. Personal quantum event maps help mapmakers revisit personal pasts to encounter new features of a past event, plan and create personal futures, or explore and recontextualize personal "nows." Such activities helped us to understand the space-time collapse happening as a result of the redevelopment of the Sharswood neighborhood.

A final methodology I will highlight is the archival praxis of the communal quantum time capsule. The communal quantum time capsule

is based on principles of quantum physics and serves as an open-access archive that enables one to send messages and objects to any point in the past or future, communicating with both ancestors and future generations. It eludes linear space-time, troubling our notions of past, present, future, history, and progress by including stories and perspectives usually rendered invisible in those realms. Currently we are exploring and experimenting with physical and digital means of creating the quantum time capsule. We have developed a digital space that hosts oral history interviews and photos of the Brewerytown-Sharswood community and the larger community surrounding it as it redevelops and changes. The website includes interviews and photos taken throughout the Community Futures Lab project. It also provides the ability for community users to create a login and add their own memories, photos, videos, and recordings to the website. Users can share and document community history and visions for the future of the community. It documents the work happening in North Philadelphia to preserve the community's history and ensure its future visions, while allowing other community members to add to the map and blogs to create a shared future and history for the community. You can find the site at <https://futureslab.community>. We have also built and installed "oral futures booths" at exhibitions and art events in other cities such as London and Chicago, and are developing ways to create entanglement and manifestation of these future visions.

Space-Time Collapse: Disentanglement and Disinvestment Leads to Temporal and Spatial Displacement

"[Barack] Obama says he takes the long arc bend toward justice. That's a coping mechanism for leaders at that level. He often says human history is a long novel and we're just trying to get our chapter right, and I resent that. It's true. He's right. But I resent it because for people living in 19121 and other ZIP codes like it, the urgency has never been greater. We don't have the time." - Omar Woodard, Next City Article (2016)

"No one is forgotten at Norman Blumberg Apartments." Mary C. Larkin, Philadelphia Inquirer article (1968)

Philadelphia, which continues to rank highest among the top ten most impoverished big cities in America for several years in a row, is a place where gentrification and racialized segregation have changed the landscape of Blackness and pushed its memory and residents to the edges of the city, into temporal-spatial ghettos. Instances of structural inequity related to housing disproportionately impact North Philadelphia and the 19121 zip code in particular, where a high percentage of the City's poor, Black and Hispanic populations live in racially concentrated poverty.

Interviewer: How would you describe the pace of North Philly?

Mr. W.: Well, if you go back ten years, it was questionable. I had hopes in North Philly, but I never realized it was going to move at the pace it moves at now. I think it moves rapidly. With all the development that's going on. I own another property. I get, every week, cards from developers, realtors, wanting to buy my property.



Map via PlanPhilly

The neighborhood known currently as Sharswood is located in North Philadelphia in the 19121 zip code, an "arrowhead-shaped neighborhood [that] sits roughly between Girard and Cecil B. Moore Avenues, from 19th to 27th Streets." Close to the center of the arrowhead stood three high-rise, low-income housing towers and fifteen surrounding low-rise, multi-unit homes known as Norman Blumberg Apartments, first opened in 1966 and is owned and managed by the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA). In such a small area, the city's inequalities related to poverty are magnified. The median household income in Philadelphia in 2016, with a 26% poverty rate, was \$41,449. In the predominantly Black neighborhood of Sharswood, the median household income was \$23,790, suffering a decline of nearly 28% from 1999 to 2013. (Assessment of Fair Housing, 2016). In other words, residents living in Sharswood had over twice the poverty rate of the entire City of Philadelphia. (2013 Census Bureau).

For these stated reasons, Sharswood was chosen by a mix of federal, state, and municipal agencies to undergo the Sharswood-Blumberg Neighborhood Transformation Plan, a \$500+ million dollar redevelopment project that included execution of eminent domain and demolition of 1,300 properties in the neighborhood, and demolition of two high rises housing nearly 500 families, and several dozen low-rise affordable housing units owned and managed by Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA). Homeowners, renters, and businesses have been temporarily and permanently displaced and relocated by the Transformation Plan, while historic properties of great cultural significance have been demolished, sold, or otherwise permanently lost.

Development of the Transformation Plan initially began in 2013, with redevelopment to take place over a ten-phase process of approximately ten years from the implementation date in 2016. The Transformation Plan aims to turn Sharswood, previously one of the poorest neighborhoods in the City, into a mixed-income neighborhood with an infusion of 500 million dollars. Under the Plan, PHA is set to build 1,200 mixed-income housing units at a price tag of approximately \$500,000 per house.

As certain parts of 19121 suffer from disproportionate poverty, poor health, and crime, other parts of the zip code are rapidly gentrifying. Deteriorating homes, vacant lands, and inhabitable properties make land deals cheap for out-of-town developers, who then build luxury and above-market properties. For example, from 2010-2016, median home prices in the zip code rose by 68%, while property values of homes in Sharswood doubled around that same time. (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2017; 2013 Census). The neighborhood's proximity to Center City shopping, theaters, and restaurants, a major university, high-end supermarkets, and access to public transportation options foster the neighborhood's attraction as a target for speculators and developers.

Many of the reasons provided for targeting the area for redevelopment, however, appear to place a great deal of blame on the marginalized residents of the neighborhood. In testimony before Philadelphia City Council and in several articles, the President of PHA begins by providing statistics of the area's poverty, crime, low educational attainment, and low unemployment. In an op-ed called "Breathing Life into a Blighted Community," for example, Jeremiah writes that Sharswood was "by almost any measure...a top contender for Philadelphia's worst community." The residents of the Blumberg high rise towers are routinely portrayed as complicit in their own poverty, violent, and without a past, meaningful history, or sense of community.

In other articles, he details a story about how he got held at gunpoint one day while visiting the Norman Blumberg towers, which in part motivated him to embark on the redevelopment project. A New York Times piece recounting the alleged incident states that "during an evening trip to the neighborhood in 2013, soon after he became head of the housing agency, he encountered a man who threatened him with a gun when he refused to buy drugs. After hearing residents' stories of crime in the area, he thought the housing authority ought to focus on the neighborhood." These narratives rely on stereotypes and imagery that paint impoverished Black people as at fault for their own circumstances and as requiring intervention from the government. As PHA put it, "the situation in Sharswood is so dire that only a big government player can create

conditions for revival on Ridge Avenue." The narratives rarely focus on the blight and disinvestment committed by the agency, and the inhabitable circumstances that many residents found themselves living in.

The public commentary also rarely discusses the gentrification that has been pushing homeowners and renters alike out of the neighborhood over the past decade, due to rising rents and property taxes. The linear progressive narrative of redevelopment touted by PHA masks the underlying systems at play, and the ways in which the government or authority itself, either by action or inaction, created or contributed to the present conditions of deterioration. In other articles, the President of the PHA places much of the blame for the community's ills on the Blumberg Towers themselves, in one Newsworks interview promising that "Life as we know it is going to change. It will be forever changed by removing the stigma that was created by this high-rise."

Helga Nowotny argues, "power, exercised by central authorities, establishes itself over space *and* over time." Inequalities related to the politics of displacement are often framed in spatial terms and removal from physical locations. However, politicians and government officials also engage the language of time and future (versus language exclusively relying on spatiality) to justify decision making regarding redevelopment and urban renewal. For instance, in a commentary in the Philadelphia Inquirer, Jeremiah notes that "PHA is making this investment in Blumberg/Sharswood now because, for too long, families in the community were told to wait. The wait is over, and today PHA, with its partners, will build a bridge of opportunity for social and economic prosperity." Here the PHA demonstrates the proposition that "along with spatial control, the temporal kind is also established, but it still completely follows the imperatives of the organizational needs of the central powers: the temporal control of bureaucracies, which is based on the punctuality that as necessary for maintaining discipline in the army, at school, and later in the factories." (Nowotny, p. 23). Sakizliog˘lu similarly observes that "the exercise of power over peoples' time appears to be a crucial tool for state colonization/appropriation of a space for gentrification."

(quoting Bourdieu).

Congressman Chakah Fattah, shortly before the implosion of the high rises, also linked the destruction of the high rises – changed space - to a changed future for the residents of the community. “To witness the Blumberg Apartment implosion this weekend is a victory for public housing, for Philadelphia, and most especially for the residents of the Sharswood neighborhood,” he said. In another article he is quoted as saying “...twenty-five years after I called for the removal of all public housing high rises in our community, we watch as the demolition of this complex will make way for a revitalized Sharswood, and a brighter future for the entire community.” The manifestation of Fattah’s vision of the future for Sharswood reminds us that “power also functions through the envisioning, management, and delivery of reliable futures.” (Eshun, 2003). Fattah’s vision as described here does not seem to consider that the community may not exist in its same composition nor benefit from the Transformation Plan changes. For example, the adjacent neighborhood of Brewerytown has “experienced significant declines in Black population,” as one of many “sites of concentrated private investment, while the general area has seen a 65 percent population decline since the 1950’s.” (Assessment of Fair Housing, pg. 102; Phila. Inquirer, 2014).

Sakizliog˘lu describes a necessity “to bring the crucial element of temporality into the analysis of displacement,” allowing a focus on trajectories of neighborhood change that “help us understand not only how residents are affected by displacement even before actual displacement occurs but also appropriation strategies of the state and landlords that put pressures on the residents.” This includes the sort of ignoring of neighborhood decline at the hands of the city that allow for the later legitimization of tactics such as eminent domain and neighborhood redevelopment resulting in displacement, as well as the intentional government policies and practices that contributed to its decline. Mr. W., a lifelong resident of the area, still living in the home he was born and raised in, highlights this when talking about the many names the neighborhood has been called before it was rebranded as Sharswood:



Patent medicine shop on Columbia Avenue. Credit: Barbara Pachter, Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA (1979)

Mr. W.: [We] just called it North Philly. And then Frank Rizzo called it *The Jungle*. It was known as the ghetto because it was red-lined. You know about that.

When asked to describe more on the history of redlining in the neighborhood, Mr. W. continues:

You couldn't get insurance. You had to go— The insurance companies stopped running policies. So, you had to go through the state plan to get fire insurance. You couldn't get the regular full policies, homeowner policies. Then also, I think it was difficult getting mortgages at that time. But we always said it was planned obsolescence. Don't know if

that's true. As Richard Nixon called it, benign neglect. Because the neighborhood was neglected for a long time. Didn't get services and things.

Residents and former residents had an astute sense of the conditions that led to the community becoming a place easily targetable for urban renewal projects such as the Transformation Plan, and part of a pattern of historic disinvestment that has led to the displacement of millions of Black families across the United States in the name of urban renewal. Brown (2014) notes that from the late 1930s to the 1970s alone, "over 1 million households were displaced by federally-sponsored actions, affecting at least 2 million Black people and hundreds of Black communities."

In an interview with former Sharswood resident Ms. K, she describes the deterioration not only being evident in the quality of housing but in the quality of relationships and sense of community:



Boarded up Storefronts on Columbia Avenue, Carney's Fine Watch Repairing. Credit: Barbara Pachter, Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA (1979).

Interviewer: What were the housing conditions like here when you were growing up?

Ms. K: They were nice, but as we got older, they started deteriorating.

That's why we had to move. The block was really deteriorating.

Interviewer: You feel like the neighborhood as a whole was as well?

What do you miss most about the way it used to be?

Ms. K: The people that stuck together and spoke to each other. You know, saying hello, and watching the house if I leave.

As a lifelong resident, Mr. W. had a clear sense of when he felt the Sharswood neighborhood began to decline: *"After the Columbia Avenue riot, primarily. That was, what, '64?"* The Columbia Avenue riot was a two-day Philadelphia race riot in 1964 that occurred along a business and residential district that ran through the neighborhood, during a period when race riots and Black community uprisings were happening around the United States. (WHYY, 2014). The riots utterly devastated what had been a thriving community of business owners of all backgrounds and ethnicities. Most of the businesses, such as theatres, grocery stores, restaurants, and furniture stores, could not recover their losses in the damage brought by the two-day riots. Business activity in North Philadelphia declined severely after the riots, as many of the damaged or destroyed stores never re-opened for business. Mr. W. went on to explain, *"because you see what Columbia Avenue was, Cecil B. Moore Avenue looks like now. Because when the riot came, they tore up all those stores."* In 1987 the city renamed the street to Cecil B. Moore Avenue, after the North Philadelphia-based Black civil rights attorney and activist who represented many of the accused young Black Muslims blamed for inciting the riot, including local activist and educator Shaykh Muhammad Ali Hassan (also known by Absynnia Hayes who would later go on to open a cultural center in the area after buying the historic Sharswood home of pre-Civil Rights artist Dox Thrash).

Several other residents interviewed at CFL highlighted the Columbia Avenue riots as a pivotal moment that forever changed the neighborhood and the communities that called it home. Many people had personal connections to the riots, such as family members who were arrested during or after the riots or who had been injured. A younger resident of the community, Mr. M. wasn't alive during the time of the riots, but had heard stories of it from his family:

"No. I don't remember it, but I remember my family was just moving up here from the South. They been here for like 30, let me see. Our brother was 2 years old.... He would be 40, so my family been up here for 38 years. They told me how Columbia Avenue was, it was a big scene, like a mall. It was like a Broad St. right here in the heart of North Philly. You know how they had the uptown stadium and all that you know. What I was getting ready to say, how when they started stop and frisk. The stop and frisk. It started on Columbia Avenue. There was so many people out there, and the drugs, and all the extortion and the crime, to the point, that, I think it was Frank Rizzo that was the mayor at the time or the chief of police, started that stop and frisk. And they could pull up on you and make you pull your pants down, and check for your all this, and make you embarrass yourself."

Confirming the communal memory passed down to Mr. M., other scholars have noted how "...the riots also helped to facilitate the political rise to power of Frank Rizzo, who favored more punitive approaches to crime." (Wikipedia). There was the community as it had existed before the riot, known by names other than Sharswood, and a very different one that existed after the riot, and by continued neglect, changing into the Sharswood that exists today.

Incidentally, the PHA housing towers that would be named Blumberg Apartments opened about two years after the 1964 riot, which had to have presented unexpected, significant, and perhaps insurmountable challenges to serving the new residents, roughly two blocks from the main riot area. As Carol Greenhouse writes about the aftermath of the 1992 L.A. riots, "once the riots had passed as an event, they lingered in a temporally confusing discourse that called the actuality of Los Angeles as a community into question" where "the violence seemed to have unsettled everyday uses of chronology in the reporting of events." Yet the multiple, intertwining causes for the deterioration of Sharswood, including the lingering temporal upheaval caused by the riot, are missing in most public commentary about the neighborhood coming from the housing authority and public officials. In the Executive Summary of the Transformation Plan (2015), for example, PHA calls the housing projects "the City's symbol for

highly concentrated poverty, drugs, truancy, illegal guns, and criminality.”

The narrative of blame centers the buildings - which had been constructed amid a post-riot zone - and on its residents, who were effectively cut off from all resources and redlined out of all value. Such a framing of the neighborhood and the residents inhabiting it omits a nuanced narrative of the challenges that connect the neighborhood and its residents to the systemic forces that serve as the primary factor playing into the community's decline. It also reinforces a largely false set of race and class-based stereotypes that portray the residents who consider themselves a part of the Sharswood community as uncaring about the neighborhood and indifferent to each other.

Stories disrupting those narratives become largely lost, like this quote from a Minister at a local church in a local newspaper:



Norman Blumberg Apartments, Credit: Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA(1969)

“[The demolition] was quite a sad occasion because some of those people had been there since they were younger. This is something that is affecting them. They’ve had to leave what they’ve always known as

home ... Now they're scattered all over the city. A bond that they've had for many years was broken." (March 2016).

The Executive Summary of the Transformation Plan stops short of recognizing PHA and the government's own role in disinvestment in the neighborhood, noting as a point of historical positioning that "...as Philadelphia precipitously lost population during the 1980s and 1990s, residents abandoned Sharswood, disinvestment took hold, businesses closed on Ridge Avenue, and Blumberg Apartments became home to a high concentration of the City's poorest families, with hundreds living in highrise towers that are unsuitable for families with children." Ms. K. remembers her displacement from the neighborhood differently, explaining:

"The first time I moved to Sharswood, my mother wanted a bigger house because she had 6 kids. We were there for 25 years and my mom raised all her kids there. So when we moved from Poplar Street...when we moved from Sharswood Street, excuse me, it was because the house was deteriorating and the back was caving in. So we had to move to Poplar Street. Then, when I moved to Poplar Street, I stayed there 10 years. Things started breaking down, the heater and the stove and stuff like that was going down. Philadelphia Housing Authority did not want to fix it so that was the other reason I moved. Then I moved back to Sharswood and when I moved back to Sharswood it was just too much for the rent."

In staking claim over both the time and space of residents impacted by the project – in particular, the public housing residents who lived in the area – PHA has continuously described the displacement of public housing residents as "temporary relocation." This is because technically, the residents who lived in public housing in the neighborhood have a right to return under HUD regulations, which means they are not permanently displaced by legal definition. However, the residents of the community were moved out with just a few months warning and few meaningful opportunities to understand the long-term implications of the redevelopment, including just what the "right to return" means for them.

The redevelopment of Sharswood will take place in phases, over an estimated ten-year period, which means that any number of situations could compromise a particular family's right to return – especially for vulnerable families who are all low-income by virtue of living in PHA public housing, disproportionately Black and of color, and many who are seniors and disabled. In *Root Shock*, Dr. Mindy Fullilove writes of urban renewal projects with rebuilding that was “sometimes separated by decades from the demolition phase of a project and placed even more unreasonable burdens on the poor and the people of color.” Such is the case in Sharswood. Since two of the Blumberg high rise towers and all of the low-rise public housing units were demolished in March 2016 as part of the redevelopment, 57 families out of 477 have been able to return to the townhomes meant to replace the public housing low and high rises. As of this writing, another 31 people have returned to the remaining high rise as of March 2019, a building for senior citizens that houses 94. Fullilove argues that “root shock, at the level of the local community, be it neighborhood or something else, works to rupture bonds, dispersing people to all directions of the compass.” She notes that even if people manage to return, “the elegance of the neighborhood – each person in his social and geographic slot – is destroyed, and even if the neighborhood is rebuilt exactly as it was, it won’t work. The restored geography is not enough to repair the many injuries to the mazeaway.”

PHA’s definitions and temporal sense of displacement and temporary relocation are severely out of step with the reality of the residents’ time, lives, sense of home and sense of community, and the ripple effect that such displacement has across various ecosystems. Fullilove goes on to write that “the failure to appreciate the costs that upheaval places on the poor means that grossly inadequate plans are made for resettlement. Issues of community life, transition to new forms of work, emotional pain of separating from a beloved place: all of these considerations are given short thrift.” In community meetings, non-PHA residents who owned homes or rented on the private market expressed fears about being unable to return to the neighborhood after it was redeveloped as mixed-income housing, because there would be a lack of affordable housing

opportunities outside of the public housing, which carries a ten year waitlist and only serves severely low-income residents in the city:

A RESIDENT: I mean, I'm 59 years old, so homeownership, that's not really in my spectrum. I have a private home and one day I may want to leave. If I wanted to rent a property but not under the PHA umbrella will I be able to be eligible, because a lot of times people in moderate middle class, they can't afford it, because the guidelines are so low? That's my concern.

Rifkin observes that "temporal deprivation is built into the time frame of every society," where people living in poverty "are temporally poor as well as materially poor." Inevitably, marginalized communities like Sharswood are disproportionately impacted by both material, spatial, and temporal inequalities in a linear progressive society, with many residents forced to occupy "temporal ghettos" as well as spatial and physical ones. Such a "narrow time span of the poor is a logical response to the realities they face," where individuals become stuck in the planning space of a contracted and constricted present, and a limited time into the future. Meanwhile, society around them speeds forward in illusory, linear progress in futures that were pre-planned with little to no input of those most impacted by the lack of resources to keep up. As one former resident shared, the future becomes difficult to see and unpredictable under a dominant temporality of displacement and redevelopment:

Interviewer: What do you see as the future of Sharswood?

Ms. T: In my future?

Interviewer: Like the future of Sharswood?

Ms. T: Like I said, I don't know.

Interviewer: What would you like to see?

Ms. T: That's if I be living. I'm a tell you, let's hope I be out here to see the build. I'm almost 50 years old. I'm hoping to be here to see it.

Creation of Communal-Space Times (in the Face of Hostile Visions of the Future)

"Regional nostalgia is recalled, utilized and capitalized upon by differently classed subjects in claiming ways in and out of place." Yvette Taylor (2013)

"Well you know, I live up here in North Philly now. It's a place where you live and love, and it's a lot of memories since this neighborhood has changed. I miss it though. It will never be the same." – Ms. E. (2016)

Despite being maligned in the media and public commentary by PHA and government officials, residents and former residents of Sharswood maintain a strong sense of connection to the neighborhood, one not only tied into their sense of identity but to their life story as a whole. As Farrar highlights, this is a mode of identity formation that eludes traditional linear time, and instead ties it to "a sense of place [that] is inextricably linked to memory formation, which is, of course, crucial to identity formation, both at the individual and collective levels."

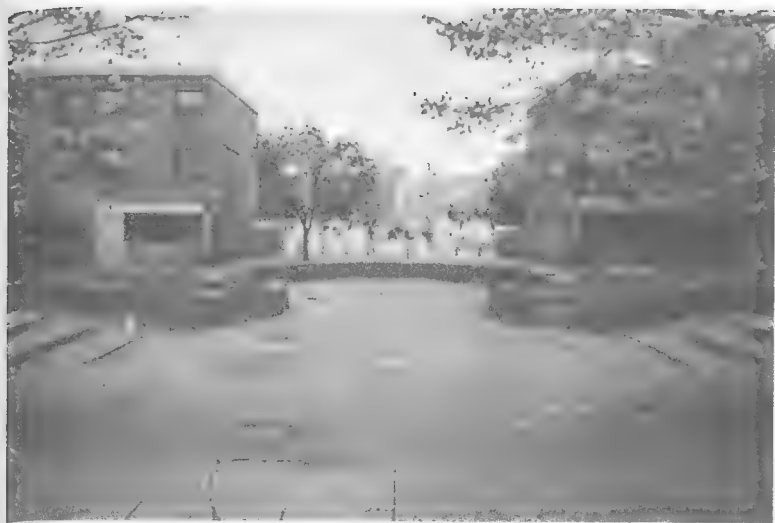
Interviewer: What communities would you say you belong to?

Ms. K: Sharswood community.

Interviewer: What ways would you say you're connected to it?

Ms. K: Born and raised.

Residents recounting of what they considered their community - and more specifically the two demolished housing towers where nearly 500 families were concentrated - was much more complicated and nuanced than the narrative invoked by government officials, their memories of the past layering with their hopes of the future. As one local community member named Bryant Jennings put it in a Philadelphia Inquirer article, residents of the neighborhood had "...our own slang, our own language. People who moved away always come back, because this is what they knew. And [the demolition] is devastating to a lot of people, because what they knew is being torn down." (2016). Former residents confirmed this view in interviews at CFL:



Sharswood-Blumberg low-rises shortly before demolition. Credit: Femi Matti (2016)

Ms. T: Yeah Blumberg [Apartments] was a pretty good place. There's nothing bad you can say about that building. Everybody got along. Like I said, it was one big happy family. Everybody fed everybody's kids in there. Every kid got along in there. It's gone. What else can I say? Well, the hope is now they building up now, it'll be a better place, it'll be a better environment for the kids. Actually, it's going to be a better place.

Interviewer: You'd like to come back to the neighborhood?

Ms. T.: Well, I'm down here every day, so that's telling me. (laughs)

Interviewer: True! Good point.

Ms. T.: I'm like, I'm down here three times a week, and like Saturday — well, I come down on Sundays because I go to church down here. And Saturday I might take a breeze through. And then next thing you know I wind up on another Saturday where Blumberg, just watching the buildings, say "oh, what memories in here."

Ms. T's experience of Sharswood accounts for a sense of social time,

one that “does not flow at one even rate, but goes at a thousand different paces, swift or slow, which bear almost no relation to the day to day of a chronicle or of traditional history.” (Braudel, 1980). She, like other residents and former residents, seems to engage with time in Sharswood in the form of “a local practice rooted in daily rituals and bound up in the particularities of unique physical spaces.” (Barrows, 2016).



Fighting Misogynoir: Centering All Black Femmes and Women - Womanist Working Collective workshop at Community Futures Lab. Credit: BQF (2016)

As Greenhouse notes, “in the United States, community has both spatial and temporal components,” where the spatial element defines community as a social field and the temporal element defines community as the historically authentic or original local, regional, or national social form.” In coming to understand some of the mechanics of the very specific communal and social time and space embodied by Sharswood, one of the phenomena underscored was the decoupling of time from space, where “social time needs to be understood as multiple and contested, rather than constituting a single dominant order.” (Bastian, 2019). The quality of time and space are not always traversed evenly, while not all communities or individuals move forward on the arrow of progress at the same rate. Time folds and unfolds into space in infinite configurations.

For a layperson, it can look as if time stood still within the Sharswood-Blumberg community, and within the towers themselves. The conditions of the neighborhood mirror those of the time when the towers were first built, while neglect of the towers themselves and other housing in the area has caused the neighborhood to fall behind on the measure of progress in rapidly gentrifying adjacent neighborhoods like Brewerytown (also in the 19121 zip code). But a closer examination of the temporal mores and chronopolitics of the residents of the neighborhood show instead intentional negotiated intercommunal temporalities. What has stood still in Blumberg is space, not time. Time has been dynamic, while space has been static until PHA and government agencies began to accelerate time and space through the Transformation Plan and its uprooting of the community, to deliver the despairing community into the future(s) of the government's visions and dreams. The scientific, so-called objective arrow of time being used to measure time in Sharswood inaccurately presumes an arrow of progress that itself presumes a direction pointed straight ahead. As writer Maureen Perkins observes: "the notion of progress is indeed closely allied to hegemony, since it is defined by those in power: the change they bring is, of course, portrayed as a change for the better."

Einsteinian space-time accelerates time and space as it were even, tethered as it were, even if supposedly relative. This amounts to subsuming any differences between time and space to deem them equivalent. Under this scenario, the future, much like space (housing, land, and even outer space), becomes accessible only to those who have the resources to accelerate at the pace determined by the dominant party – in this case, PHA, government entities, and private developers controlling time and space within Sharswood. In her interview, Ms. E. shared the sentiment of not fitting into the projected future predetermined by the urban renewal project and periphery gentrification through private development:

"They've just been tearing things down. There's a lot of construction here. But hey, I'm here to see everything change so I just deal with it. The old way was was fun and exciting, but the new way is not. I feel

that I don't belong here. I see a lot of Temple students walk by here. It's not like it used to be. It's more quiet around the neighborhood. I don't hear a lot of noise though. I don't hear no guns shooting. I used to hear the fireworks from the projects, but don't nobody fire them no more."

Taylor (2013) observes that in social structures reproducing class and gender, "not everyone can 'fit in' or flexibly cast themselves through trajectories of future potential...;" particularly in locales where "middle-class people are positioned as regenerating places, 'fitting into place' as aligned citizens able to claim and activate a 'city publics.'" For low-income residents like the majority of those living in Sharswood, their value - according to the government entities in control of their space - is in their ability to "take responsibility for their trajectories, assembling a range of networks and capitals in order to envisage and pursue a fulfilling and productive future: to 'come forward' and claim space as theirs." (Taylor, 2013). Failure to pull themselves up by their proverbial bootstraps, claim their space, and move into the future, is met with the punishment of having their space seized and their futures pre-determined by market and governmental forces.

Others, however, felt a hopeful sense of the future and their place in it despite some of the uncertainties and upheaval.

Interviewer: How do you feel about the redevelopment in the area?

Ms. K: It's nice. It's a big change to the neighborhood, which, change is good. It looks really nice and it's different.

Interviewer: Do you think that it should have been done differently at all?

Ms. K: No.

Interviewer: Do you think that things could have been done differently?

Ms. K: No, I think it's nice.

Ms. K envisioned a future for the neighborhood that had a layered temporality, inclusive of both the old way and the "new way:"

Interviewer: What do you see as the future of Sharswood?

Ms. K: It's going to expand. It's going to get bigger. After a while, it's going reach farther down. More houses are going to go down.

Interviewer: What do you think Ridge Avenue will look like in 20 years?

Ms. K: Rebuilt with stores. That's what I'm hoping. Busy again, because it used to be so nice coming up here to the fish market, Ridge-o's, Carmens. It was really nice. We used to have a restaurant here called Dirty Mike's and we'd get cheap burgers and roast pork sandwiches.

Youth and younger people from Sharswood – and particularly those who lived in the demolished housing towers of Blumberg Apartments, have other ways of expressing memories and sustained temporal connections to the neighborhood. A search on Instagram for the #ForeverBlumberg hashtag will pull up about 1,500 photos and videos of life and times in the neighborhood and housing towers prior to redevelopment, and continued connections and memorializing of the housing towers thereafter. Dozens of the images are of young people in t-shirts and sweatshirts of varied colors with Forever Blumberg scrolled across in white graffiti lettering. One article notes how people showed up to the demolition of the towers in those shirts. The phrase Forever Blumberg is itself an obvious expression of temporality – a simple statement that works simultaneously as a stark, visceral act of resistance against the severance of bonds that the demolition of the towers and subsequent displacement of its residents would enact.

The #ForeverBlumberg hashtag is eerily reminiscent to the all but forgotten history / memory of *Dig This Now*, a newspaper created by North Philly youth gangs in 1968 with help from a Temple University student. Many of the youth lived in the Sharswood towers. After a particularly bad wave of violence between rival youth gangs in 1967 and '68, and just a few years after the Columbia Ave riots, the gangs called a truce. They produced the weekly newspaper to document life in their community and gang life, exploring issues of gentrification quite a few years before the word had entered popular parlance. One of the gangs involved would

open a branch of *Dig This Now* called *Hip City* that included articles on how to reduce violence in the North Philly neighborhood. The names of the publications themselves, *Dig This Now* and *Hip City* are both bold temporal and spatial statements, rife with urgency, potential, and inclusion. Like the youth of Forever Blumberg, the neighborhood youth used the technology and social media of their day to connect issues of intercommunal violence to the violence of poverty, displacement, disinvestment, and lack of meaningful access to the future.

For one former resident, particularly, the impact of displacement on youth is pronounced:

Ms. C: And it's really sad that this young beautiful generation of people ain't got nothing to look up to, period. Their homes, and everything they knew. For example, something so wonderful. Projects didn't get torn down in the day. They outlived us. Buildings, buildings didn't do it, so why are you letting somebody tear down? That's all the kids got. That's all they had. And it got torn down. All they knew, basically the one, the ones that was made in that building, all the generations of kids that all they knew was these projects got torn down, and they don't know what happened. All they knew is that ever since them buildings came down, they don't know why. But things have been bad since then. They've lost family members. I've lost family members. It's really sad. [Crying] The kids are not happy anymore. And that takes the fun out of things.

Directions for the Future(s)

As the experiences of the residents and former residents of Sharswood demonstrate, housing, redevelopment, displacement, time, and the temporal domain of the future are inextricably linked. Further implicated are the individual, subjective temporalities and lived realities of low-income, marginalized Black people, often at odds with the linear, mechanical model of time on which the government or other systemic forces' temporal constructs are etched. As Rifkin put it, "effective

rulers...maintain a monopoly over the knowledge and tools necessary to predict and intervene with the future and, by doing so, keep the people dependent on them for direction." Kevin Birth and other scholars have similarly argued, "the dominant temporality associated with time as linear and consisting of uniform containers is disruptive to alternatives, including temporalities of hope." The economic and capitalist futures constructed by government powers, as Birth puts it, "limits the imagination and provides an inescapable and non-negotiable structure for the future."

Hierarchies of time, inequitable time distribution, and uneven access to safe and healthy futures inform intergenerational poverty in marginalized communities the same way that wealth passes between generations in traditionally privileged families. Time inequities show up at every step of the processes of displacement resulting from urban redevelopment, from the short or fully waivable notice requirements for termination of a lease agreement, to the time required for families to vacate their homes (which is often severely out of line with the time needed to secure new housing). It follows that preservation of affordable housing and prevention of displacement is inherently a time-based effort at every level.

Serving as managing attorney of the housing unit at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia for several years, I worked as part of a team of attorneys, paralegals, and tenant organizers to preserve affordable housing for low-income Philadelphians. Some of the policy work included advocating for extending the length of notice requirements for low-income renters at risk of losing their homes, and preserving the affordability of housing into the long term future by negotiating a "99 year ground lease" that locks the site into affordability for that length of time. Development of planning tools and policy worked to help communities plan for long-term futures, such as screening tools for community groups to assess housing issues and needs, zoning materials and community benefits agreements.

As a member of BQF, I work to develop sustainable and practical Black futurist strategies for achieving Black temporal autonomy and spatial



North Phila gang publishes newspaper aimed at getting jobs for its readers. Credit: Salvatore C. DiMarco, Jr., Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA (1968)

agency. As Eshun concludes in *Further Considerations on Afrofuturism*, "afrofuturism may be characterized as a program for recovering the histories of counter-futures created in a century hostile to Afrodiasporic projection and as a space within which the critical work of manufacturing tools capable of intervention within the current political dispensation may be undertaken." BQF calls for actively engaging temporalities and adopting alternative temporal orientations and frameworks, opening up access to the future, where time plays "a role as one of the channels through which defiance towards established order can be manifested." (The Colonisation of Time, 2012).

Some of these strategies including unearthing afro/retrofuturist technologies and quantum time capsules buried by our forebears. In doing research on the neighborhood for CFL, we came across archival materials for other Black civil rights and liberation projects based in North Philly. This prompted the creation of a second iteration of the project after CFL closed. Community Futurisms: Time & Memory in North Philly 002 – Black Space Agency was an art exhibition and community programming inspired by the legacy of the Fair Housing Act, Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements, and the space race in North Philadelphia during the 1960s. *Black Space Agency* was held at Icebox Project Space during the 50 year anniversary of both the Fair Housing Act and the founding of Progress Aeospace Enterprise from April 14-24, 2018, and featured an art installation and five community-based events. Featuring Philadelphia-based art works by Betty Leacraft, Black Quantum Futurism, Bryan O. Green, and Sammus, *Black Space Agency* addressed issues of affordable and fair housing, displacement/space/land grabs, redlining, eminent domain, and gentrification through the lens of afrofuturism, oral histories/futures, and Black spatial-temporal autonomy. Community programming was produced in collaboration with Youth HEALers Stand Up!, All That Philly Jazz, Metropolarity, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, and Brewerytown-Sharswood Neighborhood Advisory Committee.

In North Philly in 1968, Rev. Leon H. Sullivan, a civil rights leader and minister at Philadelphia's Zion Baptist Church, established Progress

Aerospace Enterprises (PAE) shortly after the death of Martin Luther King Jr. PAE was one of the first Black-owned aerospace companies in the world, with Sullivan stating that "when the first landing on the moon came, I wanted something there that a black man had made." Sullivan also co-founded the Zion Gardens Apartments affordable housing project with members of his church, purchasing the building from the owner after learning that Black applicants had been denied housing there based on their race. With members of his church, he founded Progress Plaza (the first Black owned supermarket plaza that still exists today) Progress Garment Factory, Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc., Zion Investment Association, and other innovative organizations and programs around the country and world. Throughout all of his organizations and at PAE in particular, Rev. Sullivan emphasized hiring of women and young, unskilled laborers and provided them with training opportunities and jobs in engineering and building parts for NASA and, controversially, weapons for war.



*Michael J.J. Maicher,, Special Collections
Research Center, Temple University Li-
braries, Philadelphia, PA (1976)*

In 1968 and 1969, the Civil Rights movement and space race would collide, with significant popular resistance to the Moon landing and the space race from the Black community, such as the Poor People's March at Cape Canaveral. Black leaders across wide and varying political stances from Martin Luther King Jr. to Eldridge Cleaver commented on the race to land on the moon, juxtaposed to the neocolonialism and urban renewal causing displacement of entire Black communities. In a 1966 speech, for example, Dr. King remarked that "there is a striking absurdity in committing billions to reach the moon where no people live...while

the densely populated slums are allocated miniscule appropriations" and ended his speech questioning "on what scale of values is this a program of progress?" Reflecting on the archives of Black newspapers and magazines like *Jet* and *Ebony*, and even national news publications reveals widespread critiques of the lack of diversity in NASA employees, and the destruction and displacement of Black communities in order to build subsidized housing for NASA employees. Partly in response to such critiques, NASA created programs that designed and utilized spaceship materials in "urban" housing, as well as campaigns to increase diversity in hiring. Much of this resistance and engagement with the space race from the Black community has been largely erased in popular memory.

Rev. Sullivan was a controversial figure whose politics were not unflawed. He has been critiqued by anti-capitalists and radical Black liberation movements for his pro-cop stance and respectability politics, especially after calling for "law and order" during the Columbia Avenue riots. However, his futurist vision of progress in the Progress Movement should be nonetheless seen as innovative and sustainable. His co-opting of the "progress" narrative and usage of the "future" in slogans were specific forms of temporal reclamation. As Nowotny observes, "temporal control is symbolized by the idea of progress, of economic boom." Sullivan seemed to grasp the close associations between temporal control, sustainable Black communities existing within the American imperialist project, and the notion of linear progress well. The technology built at PAE and through other Rev. Sullivan projects seemingly allowed for a hacking into future histories where Black people had already been largely erased - such as in the space race - and helped to ensure our appearances in those histories as they play out on the linear, progressive timeline. Or, as Eshun puts it, "chronopolitically speaking, these revisionist historicities may be understood as a series of powerful competing futures that infiltrate the present at different rates."

Black Space Agency aimed to restimulate memory of these interconnected events and underexplored history, making visible the threads overlaying the present and future(s) of affordable housing, Black liberation, and the fight for space and time in our communities. The

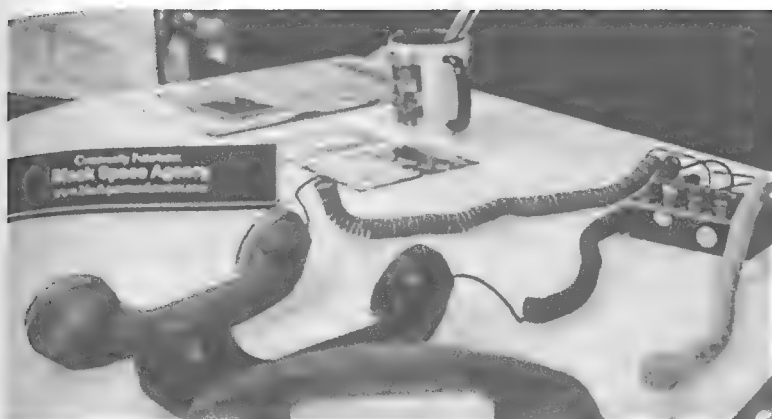
project specifically located these inquiries within the context of uncovering time and memory in North Philly, asking what seeds memory, unburying quantum, Afrodiasporic histories, and envisioning what tools are needed to create liberatory Afrofuture(s). In the exhibition BQF created collages contain archival images and text from newspapers and magazines from the 1960s, chronicling the fight for fair housing, the space race, and the creation of Progress Aerospace Enterprises. Programming for Black Space Agency included:

Blue Note Salon: Art ~ Jazz ~ Activism in North Philly with All That Philly Jazz Director Faye Anderson, featuring artists and activists Josh Graupera, Tieshka K. Smith, Mike O'Bryan, Stormy Kelsey – Panel and interactive discussion on the role jazz musicians and the jazz culture played in paving the way for the Civil Rights Movement, and how local artists are connecting art to social change movements addressing gentrification, displacement and cultural heritage preservation. A recording of the conversation is available at All That Philly Jazz website.

Black Space-Time Matters Movie Day + Metopolarity Sci-Fi reading, Open Mic, with screening of short film *Afronauts* by Frances Bodomo and an episode of *Cosmic Slop* called *Space Traders*, based on a short story by attorney and critical race theorist Derek Bell.

Housing Futures: Landlord-Tenant Rights workshop with Brewerytown-Sharswood Neighborhood Advisory Council and Community Legal Services of Philadelphia. This workshop was a crash course on tenants' rights covering a wide variety of topics including: eviction protections, getting security deposits back, dealing with habitability and repair problems, illegal lockouts, and how to prepare for a Landlord-Tenant hearing.

Youth Housing Visioning Session with Youth HEALers Stand Up! A workshop with Youth HEALers Stand Up! and community members to envision the future(s) of housing and new models of support, resources, emotional and physical health and safety for low



Black Space Agency exhibition at Icebox Project Space. Credit: D1L0 DeMille (2018)

income/institutionalized/disconnected people under 25 in Philly. These visioning sessions were youth-led and facilitated, with support from youth justice and housing advocates and impacted youth. Visioning session included mapping, storytelling, resource-sharing and other activities that will allow youth and participants to create a collaborative, multi-prong action plan for shaping the future of housing justice in Philadelphia. BQF also produced a publication called Community Futurisms Housing Futures Workbook, a workbook meant to help capture the voices of people usually left out of conversations and policies on affordable housing issues that affect their lives and communities.

In May 2019, BQF presented an exhibition called “All Time is Local” at The Center for Emerging Visual Arts, where we considered time’s intimate relationship to space and locality through a text, object, and video installation. Including select pieces from our Dismantling the Master’s Clock, Temporal Disruptors, and Black Space Agency series, the works meditated on the complex, contested temporal and spatial legacies of those historical, liberatory Black futurist projects based primarily in North Philly. Some of these projects, like Progress Aerospace Enterprises, have been all but forgotten, while others still stand and persist, such as Progress

Plaza, Zion Gardens, and Berean Church.

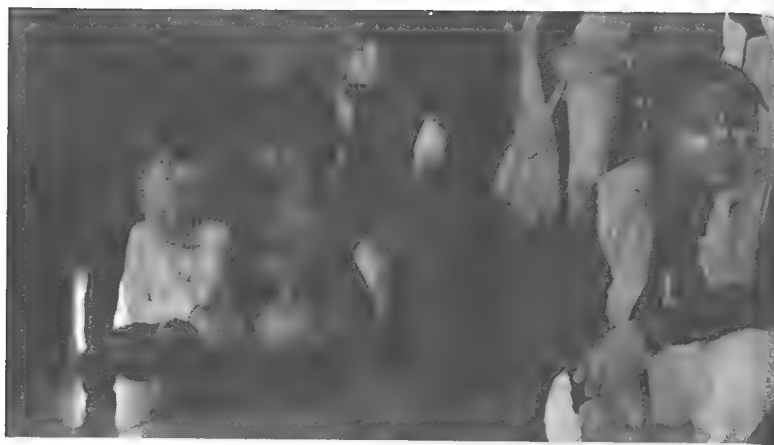
Berean Church and the Berean Enterprise Movement is part of another web of black retrofuturist projects and activism in Philadelphia, co-founded by Dr. Caroline Anderson and Reverend Matthew Anderson. Dr. Anderson was a pioneering physician as one of the first Black women to earn a medical degree in the US, a teacher, and social activist alongside such contemporaries as Lucretia Mott, W.E.B. DuBois, and Sarah Mapps Douglass. While maintaining a private medical practice, she co-founded Berean Institute in North Philly alongside Rev. Matthew Anderson in 1899 with a mission in opposition to the discriminatory, all-white orphans policy at Girard College across the street. At Berean Institute she was assistant principle, and taught elocution, hygiene, and physiology, while also being an organizer and administrator for Rev. Anderson's Berean Enterprise movement (Berean = BEREa/BEROEA = small city). Unfortunately, the historical marker commemorating Berean Institute on Girard Avenue fails to bear Dr. Caroline Anderson's name but there is an extensive collection of her letters archived at Temple University and biographical information currently displayed prominently at Berean Presbyterian Church.

Utilizing the civic engagement process, I protested against and documented the destruction of communal memory of local North Philly community activist Florie Dotson, as an 18-year-old mural dedicated to her memory and the Civil Rights Movement gets completely covered by a luxury townhouse. Eerily, the mural depicts a scene protesting lack of access to affordable housing. Public art, monuments, and murals, whether formally commissioned by an institution or informally created by the community, are constantly destroyed and erased all over Philadelphia, then replaced by condominiums and other luxury housing. This is particularly true of murals depicting Black historical events. Another prominent example is Dox Thrash, a pre-Civil Rights era artist and activist who lived in Sharswood at 23rd and Columbia/C.B. Moore in the '40s and 50's. Shaykh Muhammad would go on to purchase the Dox Thrash home and open Muhammad's African Asian Cultural Center in it. In recent years, murals dedicated to the legacy of Dox Thrash were

destroyed on two occasions; ironically by the Department of Housing and Urban Development when it was located on the side of his deteriorating house and painted over, and most recently the Dox Thrash mural at 16th Street and Girard Avenue was three-quarters covered by luxury condos. The Dox Thrash home recently sold at Sheriff's sale, despite the best efforts and legal battles of local activists, architects, students, preservationists, and the daughter and granddaughter of Shaykh Muhammad. Other Philadelphia Black women historians like Faye Anderson and Jackie Wiggins recently uncovered the destruction and removal by developers of a historical marker at the former North Philly home of Black Harlem Renaissance writer Jessie Redmon Fauset.

Despite the status of the physical remnants of many of these Black futurist projects, their implications stretch backward and forward in the afrofuturist timescapes undergirding North Philly. In North Philly, all time is local like politics and the weather. Understanding Sharswood and the surrounding North Philly community through its affective, layered, durational, and contextual temporality challenges the exclusionary, government-sponsored narratives that seek to paint residents as complicit in their own poverty and disinvestment, and as deserving of a gentrification that will wipe out the past and move the community into the future of the government's visions.

As I've noted in previous work, utilizing Afrodiasporan temporal technologies and through a recasting and recalibrating of Colored People's Time, we can meaningfully disrupt progressive linear notions of time, and actively, radically create visions of non-local future(s), quantum nows, and unpredictable pasts for marginalized Black people who are typically denied access to creative control over their own temporal modes and timescapes. While we know Western linear time to be an outmoded, ill-paced, oppressive, and clunky technology that may eventually be supplanted by quantum realities, it is impractical to expect immediate or equitable recompense with Afrodiasporan ancestral time consciousness and practices for Afro-descendant peoples. It is practical to continue to develop, share and fortify temporal practices and ethics consistent with our experiences as diasporic, displaced Africans living in communities



*AfroFuturist Affair 6th Annual Charity & Costume Ball at Community Futures Lab.
Credit: Chet Pancake for Queer Genius Film (2016)*

that have largely assimilated into a linear, progressive time-construct that leaves us consistently behind on the timeline – an artifice of progress.

To quote Rifkin, “the revaluation of time is a prerequisite to the revaluation of life.” Afrofuturist methodologies provide weapons for disrupting the messages that Black people won’t survive into and thrive in the future(s). It also comes with visual and cultural language that posits joy and hope as technologies allowing Black people to open up access to the futures. When people feel they have a stake in futures that are nondeterministic, not strictly associated with economic gain, and rooted in community, possibilities for hope, creative control, and meaningful access can spring forward:

Interviewer: What do you see for the future, for this community, or for North Philly, or for the world?

Ms. C: I see whatever we work hard to do. Speak what we doing into existence. Do what we know that we worked hard at. And do what we were taught. Be mothers. And don’t give up on your dreams, and what

you set out on. Me, you. Don't give up on that. We going to add new walls to this jawn.



Community Futures Lab. Credit: Chet Pancake for Queer Genius Film (2016)

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Blumberg



Aiden Gibbs

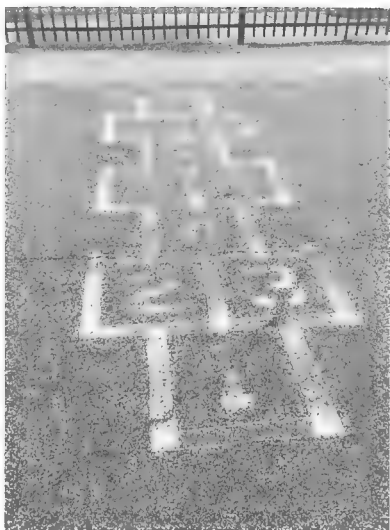
I miss the projects. The two 18-[pw1] story buildings spray painted and surrounded by corner store trash. Little boys playing baseball with two-liter soda bottles, bases made from bricks they stole from the park. Little girls that played Double Dutch made from long clotheslines, shouting various chants, from "Johnny over the ocean" to "Girl Scouts, Girl Scouts, would you do," their laughter resounding between Judson and Hamburger Way.

I miss the late-night fire alarms that forced hundreds of tired bodies to quickly shuffle down the smoky stairwell. The cool air hitting our faces as we finally took in breaths without the fear of suffocation. The sleepy eyes and drooping shoulders all waiting for the fire department to come. People passing off blankets to younger children, food offered by concerned strangers. "My mom brought corn bread down if anybody wants it!" My mother would sit us down on the bench near the park, my youngest brother attempting to lean on me and fall asleep. I would push him off me every time, complaining to my mother, "Dyeme keeps trying to lay on me. I don't want to sit next to him." She would look at us with eyes still half closed: "Just let your brother go to sleep." He'd attempt to lean on me again, and I'd stand up, letting his head hit the cold bench. My mother would scold me for being so self-centered, making me sit back down and let my brother lean against me. I would eventually fall asleep with him after long bouts of complaining until the fire department gave the all clear for us to go back inside.

I miss the school across the street from the Judson Way building. The early mornings in Ms. Dune's kindergarten classroom with Arnold and Avon, my best friends. She told us, "You can be anything." The playground that was empty except for two broken-down basketball hoops. But Jada brought her chalk so we could play hopscotch, Quamaine brought his brother's basketball, Jared brought the football, and the school provided what they could—

hula hoops and jump ropes. We played tag or "helicopter, helicopter." Someone would swing the rope high in the air while a group of girls chanted "Helicopter, helicopter, please come down."

I miss having friends that were an elevator ride away. Spending the night at Avon's house on the seventh floor, forgetting my toothbrush, and taking a quick ride up to the twelfth floor to retrieve it. Doing my homework at Mrs. Reggie's house with Arnold while she made dinner. Mr. Reggie's walking into the apartment, giving me as warm a hug as he would his own son, "Hey sweetie." He'd ask me if I needed help with my homework, his wife laughing as she mixed spaghetti on the stove. "You know



*Hopscotch at Blumberg site
Photo credit: Aiden Gibbs*

that girl don't need no help. She's smart as a whip, ain't that right, sweetie?" I'd peer up from writing my three times table, bashful from the eyes that looked at me with affection. At the end of the night, Mrs. Reggie would take the eight-stop elevator ride to the twelfth floor with me, giving me a long, tight squeeze with a kiss on my forehead. She always smelled like spring.

And how could I not miss Christmas? My brothers and I laughing at the table with hot chocolate, the smell of homemade peanut butter cookies in the oven making us antsy. My mother blasting holiday music, forcing us to dance around with her to "Jingle Bell Rock" and "Santa Claus Go Straight to the Ghetto." Our neighbors who would bring gifts to help fill an otherwise empty tree, because to them we were family. "Merry Christmas," they'd say while passing off dolls, trucks, and footballs for us kids in the community center. There wasn't time to feel poor or hopeless, but to hug and be thankful for the people who loved and appreciated us.

This was home. Eighteen stories of love and community, where people cared in a way that went beyond the idea of neighbors. We were a family, all living together under one roof. I will never forget the only place that has truly felt like home, 1516 Judson Way, and all of its memories.

Remembering the Future in North Philadelphia: Engaging community futurisms to restore hope and healing in the face of collective trauma



R.L. Stanford

Introduction

In 2017, racially and economically segregated communities in the United States continue to struggle with high rates of violent death and injury as a result of community and interpersonal violence (Cottam, Huesby, & Lutz, 2006). There has been growing recognition of how chronic community violence in the United States inflicts massive trauma on primarily poor, black and brown individuals, where cities such as Philadelphia suffer rates of PTSD comparable to people living in warzones and refugee camps abroad (Cottam, M., et al., 2006; Volk, S., 2012). Violence, both community-based and domestic, targets young Black men and women, as well as those in poverty, disproportionately (Varges, J.H.C., 2005; Cottam, M., et al., 2006). At the same time there is a growing awareness within the United States of how persistent historical and structural violence heaped on poor, Black, and Brown communities perpetuates both interpersonal violence within communities, as well as violence between communities and authorities like law enforcement, results in disproportionate rates of incarceration, death, and other outcomes that cause damage to the collective fabric of vulnerable communities (Benjamin, R., 2016; Akinyela, M., 2002). Individuals within

these neighborhoods often suffer massive stress from being structurally marginalized and unable to access basic resources and safety in the community, as well as the trauma from the inevitable community and domestic violence that arises in the wake of oppression (Cottam, M., et al., 2006; López, C., 2011).

'Trauma' as it is currently understood, has also become a popular concept that the mental health professions have invested in, creating a "trauma industry" around treating trauma symptoms in individuals (López, C., 2011; Craps, S., 2013). While this perspective and an increased understanding of the neurobiological and social impact of PTSD does some work to depathologize the experience trauma in individuals, it does not necessarily address the collective nature of trauma that results from economic, racial, and political oppression (López, C., 2011; Craps, S., 2013).

Communities struggling with collective trauma often live without a sense of agency, a mechanism for collective planning and cohesion, or any sense of the future, leading to the stereotypical neglect and misery that marks poor communities around the U.S and abroad (López, C., 2011; Eyerman, R., 2004; Cottam, M., et al., 2006). Effectively restoring hope, cohesion and agency in marginalized neighborhoods in the United States requires social workers and other mental health professionals to begin engaging in discourse, theory and practice that is directed towards communities, utilizing neighborhood space, rituals, and culture to promote a sense of connectedness, power, and hope for the future.

These goals mirror the recovery goals for individuals who live with post-traumatic stress disorder and other effects of trauma (López, C., 2011; Herman, J., 1997). Fields such as social work might be able to more effectively aid in the healing of struggling communities by directly addressing collective, historical trauma at the neighborhood level, bringing together the tools of both micro and macro work, as well as infusing the field with innovation from varied disciplines such as literature, culture, and critical liberation, in an effort to construct collective healing methods suitable for use in the United States.

This paper proposes a model for a community healing process aimed

at combatting collective trauma in Philadelphia neighborhoods using the emerging concept of community futurisms to create a space of healing, imagination and futurity to promote a neighborhood's sense of collective hope and agency. Threads will be incorporated from locally relevant speculative movements like Black Quantum Futurism and anti-oppressive mental health work promoted by activist-clinicians like Ignacio Martín-Baró, as well as more clinical theory around the emerging concept of time perspective therapy, and the power of mental simulation to visualize the future. This healing space is hypothesized to increase a sense of agency and community cohesion and ultimately a more positive sense of a shared, collective future that can be utilized to make change as a community.

Mainstream Conceptions of Trauma

Trauma is typically defined as the damage incurred to individuals following an event or events that involves "actual or threatened death or injury, or threat to physical integrity of self or others" as well as "an experience [involving] intense fear, helplessness, or horror" (Lopez, C., 2011, p. 301). The individualized conception of trauma gained the status of an official disease in 1980 in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Craps, S., 2013). Since then trauma and PTSD in individuals has been extensively championed, researched, and discussed in the context of different populations, including veterans, victims of domestic violence, and international refugees, with scholars often defaulting to acknowledging clinical similarities in responses to violence and distress across these groups (Craps, S., 2013).

Individuals facing extreme events like violence experience changes in their body, such as increased breathing and oxygen intake, increased heartbeat, hypervigilance, and other physiological changes that prime an individual for flight, fight, or freeze responses (López, C., 2011; Herman, J., 1997; Volk, S., 2012). While the body is engaged in these survival processes, the individual's neocortex shuts down, rendering conscious memory, speech, and reasoning useless, resulting in traumatic memories being encoded in the body in fragments, experienced by the individual as intrusive thoughts, behaviors, and emotions that are frightening (López, C., 2011; Herman, J., 1997; Craps, S., 2013). This fractured

encoding leads to an individual's inability to move forward from the trauma, keeping the individual "stuck in time" (López, C., 2011). Traumatized individuals are said to exhibit a wide range of difficulties following terrifying events, including anxiety and fear, hypervigilance, anger, and mood swings (Volk, S., 2012; López, C., 2011).

One of the most notable aspects of chronic trauma and stress in individuals is a sense of forshortening, where "life is constricted in the sense that daily survival is the focus of victims of trauma, and their sense of the future is surviving until tomorrow (Cottam, M., et al., 2006, p. 6). This can result in crippling levels of depression, or numbness, and a profound loss of hope (López, C., 2011; Herman, J., 1997). Individualized interventions traditionally use talk therapy and retelling of the trauma narrative to help individuals regain a sense of hope and future, and become 'unstuck' from the traumatic event they experienced (López, C., 2011; Craps, S., 2013). People who have experienced prolonged imprisonment (i.e. political prisoners, domestic violence, incarcerated, institutionalized) also experience a loss of their past, as often traumatic pasts are too difficult to confront, and so survivors dissociate from them (Cottam, M., et al., 2006). This lack of connection to a past and future also disempowers people so they "become incapable of planning actions that would change their circumstances, take advantage of opportunities, make opportunities, and offer an alternative future" (Cottam, M., et al., 2006, p. 6).

The medicalized version of trauma, as a neuropsychological, ultimately individual experience with a 'post' period of safety, has resulted in what seem like universally acceptable treatments for trauma (Craps, S., 2013). Contemporary trauma theorists, however, note that current Western conceptions of PTSD, with its narrow focus discrete trauma events rather than chronic environments of deprivation, defines trauma as ultimately affecting one person, and the events causing their trauma s being rooted outside of history and culture, and rooted within an individual's psyche and biology (Craps, S., 2013). While this definition has been immensely useful in understanding how violence and other intrusions linger in the psyche and body, it does not necessarily encompass the generational,

persistent and historical and cultural aspects of the type of trauma that occurs under the systemic violence that marginalized people face in the current historical period of late capitalism (Craps, S., 2013). Marginalized people face not only chronic stress of physical danger and death, but also the everyday stressors of racism, poverty, and the threat of incarceration or institutionalization (Craps, S., 2013). The DSM's conception of PTSD does not necessarily account for these forms of trauma. Alternative conceptions of trauma, including complex trauma, oppression-based trauma, insidious trauma, postcolonial syndrome, and post-traumatic slave syndrome are all attempts at broadening the Eurocentric diagnosis to incorporate the impact of oppression on the psyche, as well as outlining trauma in situations where violence is ongoing and there is no 'post' period of safety (Craps, S., 2011, p. 25).

Critics of the dominant conception of trauma posit that focusing only on the individual level of trauma leaves "unquestioned the conditions that enabled the traumatic abuse"—conditions like political, economic, and racial oppression caused by violent political, social and economic system and traumatic historical legacies such as colonization (Craps, S., 2011). This inadvertently channels the energies of fields like social work towards treating individual pathology with medications and psychotherapy, and away from "taking collective action towards systemic change" (Craps, S., 2011, p. 28).

Collective trauma and community functioning

Collective trauma—also referred to as historical, cultural and or ancestral trauma or injury—refers to the social, moral, and cultural damage that chronic, multigenerational violence and disenfranchisement against a group of people creates (López, C., 2011; Eyerman, R., 2004). Collective trauma is often discussed as a result of mass violence, such as genocide, civil war, slavery, and daily life living under a system of oppression such as Jim Crow (López, C., 2011; Craps, S., 2013). Collective trauma often results in cultural losses of group identity and symbolic meaning, as well as a loss of trust in other people and institutions (Eyerson, R. 2004, p.160; López, C., 2011p. 303). For communities living with sustained violence and deprivation, they must learn to live with

"terror, violence, powerlessness and silence" in environments where violence becomes 'normativized' (López, C., 2011, 2011, p.301), a cultural and collective symptom akin to the numbing features observed in individuals who live with constant violence (Cottam, M. et al., 2006; Vargas, J.H.C., 2005). These impacts combined often create a sense of hopelessness and a lack of community cohesion and power that affects how communities function day-to-day (López, C., 2011).

These collective losses cannot be confronted solely with talk therapy with individuals who find themselves seeking help for their symptoms (Craps, S., 2013; López, C., 2011). They damage collective identities and social structures, and memories of oppression are passed on en masse to new generations (Eyerman, R., 2004; López, C., 2011). Collective trauma must be addressed at the community level through local traditions of decision making, rituals, meaning making, public education programs, and other collective modes to honor the history and ancestry of the surviving community (López, C., 2011). Indigenous communities, for example, have begun to incorporate ancestral rituals and gatherings in order to process historical traumas that impact present day life (Goodkind, J. R., Hess, J. M., Gorman, B., & Parker, D. P., 2012). Refusing to address collective trauma could have great impact on societies, leading to a breakdown in social fabric, and an increase in crime and war (López, C., 2011).

The loss of the ability to envision a shared future as a community has particular implications for the long-term health of a community. The violence of oppression and its aftereffects "destroy individual and groups' abilities to imagine an alternative condition of life and recognize ways of achieving change" (Cottam, M., et al., 2006, p.2). This makes individuals communities vulnerable to continued victimization, as well as perpetuating increasing interpersonal violence and isolation for members within the community (Cottam, M., 2011).

While the literature on collective healing practice has been increasing, interventions that specifically target a community's ability to plan and imagine a positive shared future have not been clearly outlined, particularly in the context of an urban community in the United States.

Addressing the collective in Philadelphia

The city of Philadelphia provides an ideal environment to demonstrate the engagement of community futurisms as a collective healing practice. Philadelphia is notoriously organized into neighborhoods and blocks, with a diversity of inhabitants and ancestral histories, including Black Americans with long standing origins in the Northeast and/or American South, more recent Central American, Russian, Caribbean, and West African immigrants, to Italian, Irish, and Polish descended white Americans with cultural institutions embedded into Philadelphia infrastructure. Philadelphia throughout its long history as an American city, has sustained multiple historical injuries, particularly in its Black, Latino, and poor communities. Discreet events as well as eras of federal and local policy steeped in racial and economic disenfranchisement still impact the social structure of the city today. Events like the MOVE bombing, deindustrialization, the crack epidemic, and 1964 uprisings continue to affect the collective memory and health of the cities' most vulnerable neighborhoods, in turn impacting policing tactics, trust in authority, employment opportunities, and responses to addiction in the community. At this current moment in history, Philadelphia faces multiple community level stressors that resonate with the economic, political, and cultural zeitgeist of the rest of the United States. Current conflicts include gentrification, public school closures and charter school takeovers, political turmoil following nationwide responses to policing, immigration, and other civil rights issues. Environmental, economic, and racial disparities continue to cause harm to Philadelphia residents while the city figures out ways to confront newer struggles.

The particular type of chronic trauma primarily poor Black neighborhoods in Philadelphia face has been compared to those escaping war zones living in refugee (Cottam, M., 2006). For both groups the chronic trauma and living conditions perpetuated by structural violence perpetuates "environments full of ordinary violence" characterized by a "lack of physical safety and increased levels of emotional trauma and constant fear" (Cottam, M., 2006, p. 8). Cottom makes the distinction that while refugee camps are composed of people who have fled violence, U.S.

ghettos are composed of accumulated people who are left behind economically by the wider society, perpetuated and exacerbated by the U.S.'s history of slavery, segregation, and economic deprivation encouraged by a "capitalistic society that economically uses and disadvantages ethnic minorities and women" (Cottam, M., 2006, p. 9). Philadelphia's struggle with the closing of factories and current issues with gentrification mirrors these national issues of economic injustice.

At the same time, Philadelphia has a long history of political and cultural resistance, resilience, and innovation. Philadelphia has fostered Black social workers and researchers like WEB Dubois and Elijah Anderson, as well as protest movements such as Occupy Philly, and artistic movements like Afrofuturism. More recently, Philadelphia has been home to an emerging movement of grassroots futurist practices inspired by the experiences of poor, Black, brown, and queer people in the city. Afrofuturism, sci-fi, and speculative conceptualizations of social issues recently popularized by artists, writers, and activists such as Black Quantum Futurism (BQF) and Metropolarity collectives have proposed theoretical frameworks aimed at addressing the ongoing damage of capitalism and institutionalized oppression witnessed in contemporary communities (Phillips, R., 2015; Metropolarity, 2016).

BQF's Community Futures Lab served throughout 2016 as a space where Philadelphians living in a neighborhood racing rapid gentrification could remember and bear witness to the lives lived there, where imagining viable futures as a collective is possible in spite of the fracturing years of neglect and gentrification within neighborhoods. BQF Collective has worked to record and preserve memories of current residents using oral histories and photography, held evictions, expungement, and mental health workshops open to the public, and has provided space for creative expression around memory, time travel, and black conceptions of history and time. The work of BQF collective and its brick and mortar entity, Community Future Labs—as well as the other sci-fi and action entities grown in Philadelphia communities, reflects a resurgence of Afrofuturist thought in the climate of speculative culture, technological advancement, and the growing instability of late capitalism globally (Benjamin, R., 2016).

Speculative movements like BQF turn to science-fiction as a practical strategy in imagining survival for marginalized people into the future, as well as imagining alternative ways of life away from neo-liberalist, late capitalist, consumerist culture (Phillips, R., 2015; Phillips, R., 2016; Benjamin, R., 2016).

BQF's underlying philosophy will be utilized as a basis for a proposed process for engaging community futurisms as a collective healing method in Philadelphia . BQF is an ideal philosophy to draw from when thinking about engaging futurity and hope in Philadelphia communities because of its local roots, history of developing futurist frameworks based on ancestrally relevant conceptions of time, power, and imagination, as well as its demonstration of practical community applications and engagement from community members in the North Philadelphia area. BQF has a strong critical perspective that is conscious of historical injuries and how Western ideas of time disregard how atrocities like slavery and displacement live on in the lives of Black Americans, coalescing with liberation psychology, anti-oppressive social work practice, anti-colonial therapy, and other critical mental health frameworks that incorporate history, culture, and power into its methodologies (Phillips, R., 2015; Phillips, R., 2016).

Community futurisms as an emerging framework

Community futurisms, as conceived by BQF collective founder R. Philips "explores the collective envisioning of futures of marginalized communities through active imagining and co-creating of the community's future" while discovering, activating, and preserving community history (personal communication, May 15, 2017). BQF's understanding of trauma and healing in the community is centered around indigenous African conceptions of time, the central trauma of slavery and white supremacist aftershocks, and how time travel can be a form of resistance for diasporic peoples (Phillips, R., 2015; Phillips, R., 2016). It posits that through certain practices and exercises of science, the imagination, music, and other inputs, people can achieve the power to see into alternate futures and can choose to enact those possibilities in the present (Phillips, R., 2015). BQF practice includes exercises that utilizes

mirrors, guided imagery, sound, light and creative writing to gain contact with preferred futures, as well as to gain strength and wisdom from the lives of ancestors (Phillips, R., 2015; Phillips, R., 2016). The end goal is to achieve greater self-determination, agency, and hope in the midst of ongoing oppression.

While BQF collective's philosophical foundation lies within grassroots community work, literature, history, and science, the mental health literature also supports the relevance of future visioning for treatment of trauma. Infusing clinical theories may strengthen the framework of community futurisms for its use in social work and other mental health professional fields, as well as increase effectiveness of the community healing process.

The practice of future visioning is supported by an emerging therapeutic framework called time perspective therapy, as well as emerging research on imagination and mental simulation. Time perspective therapy has been proposed as a new narrative treatment for PTSD that incorporates participants' perceptions of the past, present, and future in order to confront the temporally-based symptoms of trauma in individuals (Sword, R.M., Sword, R.K., Brunskill, S.R., & Zimbardo, P.G., 2014). The intervention seeks to create balance among an individual's past, present, and future time zones, so that positive associations can be made with each temporality, and all time zones become accessible to the participant (Sword, R.M., et al., 2014). Participants learn to be more aware of negative connotations they may attach to the future or their past and grow greater positive perspectives for each of their temporalities (Sword, R.M., et al., 2014). This approach was initially developed with veterans, but has since been expanded to other groups confronting trauma, to great success in symptom reduction (Sword, R.M., et al., 2014).

Work has also been done to assess how visualizing futures affects coping and well-being for individuals in the present. Studies have shown that imagining a future task or situation stimulates the same structures in the brain as ones related to memory and lived experience (Schacter, D.L., 2012). Scholars have documented how visualizing future situations and the processes required to achieve success have increased functioning and

copied in test subjects ((Taylor, S.E., Pham, L.B., Rivkin, I.D., & Aror, D.A., 1998; Schacter, D.L., 2012), aiding in planning and organizational skills, as well as lowering stress levels. Studies also show that future visioning on its own, without an emphasis on process or reality can lead participants' into a false sense of hope or success, ultimately not supporting successful completion of a task (Taylor, S.E., Pham, L.B., Rivkin, I.D., & Aror, D.A., 1998; Schacter, D.L., 2012). Both of these situations speak to the power of honing and deepening skill in future visioning, especially when overcoming trauma and maintaining community functioning is at stake.

The integration of a cultural and social paradigm shift with emerging frameworks in clinical work is a necessary one when engaging in collective level healing, as collective trauma damages not only the bodies and psyches of members of the community, but the symbolic, cultural, narrative reality of the community. For those aspects, disciplines such as art, music, storytelling, political consciousness raising, and public education are important to heal the community system in a meaningful way that can be passed on transgenerationally (Martín-Baró, I., Aron, A., & Corne, S., 1994; López, C. (2011).

The following proposed workshop series incorporates the local work of BQF and other futurists, temporal therapy, and the visualization power of imagination to address the loss of hope and a sense of future in a North Philadelphia neighborhood that is impacted by high rates of poverty, violent incidents, mass incarceration, and the impending gentrification of a local major university. This workshop will build on local strengths to promote connection, engagement, and creation of a local community futurism that can be built upon for future collective action and resilience. This framework is designed to be utilized by existing entities to explore collective healing with a constituent community. Community anchors are encouraged to develop and record experiences of instituting local versions of this framework in communities suffering from massive trauma.

Remember the Future: A Creative Writing Workshop¹

Remember the Future is a proposed creative writing workshop aimed at providing a space for North Philadelphia residents to engage with their own conceptions of the future, as well as to share and collaborate with their neighbors to create a positive, shared future reality. Participants will write stories, poetry, or songs to gain skill in envisioning more positive futures for their communities and themselves. The workshop will incorporate the powerful cultural history of Afro-futurism in Philadelphia, as well as showcase the local wisdom and talent of local residents.

The goal of Remember the Future is to strengthen the community by regaining a sense of the future through creative work. It will provide a safe space to encourage participants to engage with the work of seeing a future for the local community after violence and trauma. The workshop would help participants develop skill and practice in envisioning the future using past experiences, present strengths, and creativity. The local neighborhood would also undergo healing, as the future-oriented writing created within the workshop will be performed at a local arts organization so that neighbors, participants' families, and the Philly art community will be invited to witness participants' visions of the future.

This workshop would encourage a positive sense of the future, greater community connections, greater sense of alternate, more desirable realities, hope, undoing normalization of community violence and oppression, and gaining the ability to visualize the future, so that people can begin creating it. Participants will also be educated on how trauma works in individuals and communities, and can disseminate that knowledge throughout their networks.

Facilitators and participants will explore their communities' past, present, and future through a futuristic lens of 'time-travel' as inspiration for individual projects that participants will build on throughout the workshop. Participants will share the products of the workshop on the

¹ See Deep Space Mind worksheet in Resources

fourth week in an event where community members, family, local artists and staff can bear witness to participants' 'future memories,' or alternative stories of their future communities and future selves.

Preparation: Find trusted wisdom sources in the community and preferably an established space that can hold healing there— a location that is thought of as safe to community, thought of as a positive force, able to logistically hold people, warm, food, etc. Develop worksheets and activities together with wisdom holders you partner with. Learn about trauma in individuals and communities if the knowledge is not already present, as well as material on futurism. Use these sources to inform workshop structure and activities. Work with community organizations and networks to recruit participants. Listen for feedback from potential recruits about how the workshop will be most interesting or useful for them. Incorporate that knowledge into the workshop

First meeting: Give a general idea of goal of group, but leave room for participatory process. Build emotional safety by setting up ground rules of respect, confidentiality, and any others the group might want to include. Discuss group expectations and values, in order to build cohesion and trust. Begin discussion around trauma, memory, and futurism to get a sense of the group's knowledge and interests. Play an ice breaker that asks the group questions about their general comfort or discomfort with experiences of the past, present, and future, as well as orienting experiences around where people live, how long they have been a part of their community, and their general opinions about their community. This activity is intended to build awareness of participants' own temporal orientation, as well as to gain skill in listening to others' perspective, and trusting other participants with opinions and experiences. Workshops should tailor questions to the specific locality of the participants. Sample questions include 'Who here finds it difficult to think about the future? Who here believes the best music was created in the past? Who here finds it hard to enjoy the moment? Who here has witnessed violence in the neighborhood?'

Participants should then be engaged in an interactive exercise that raises awareness of alternative ideas of time. One BQF inspired activity

involves recalling a strong past memory, and writing in great detail about that memory, followed by writing in detail about the present moment, followed finally by imagining a future moment that the individual can see well, and describing that moment in great detail. This exercise can give participants experience in the imaginative processes that will be utilized with greater intensity over the course of the workshop.

Over the course of the workshop, similar visualization and writing exercises should be utilized for the present moment, the past, and the future, with time dedicated to each temporal location, and discussion around the utility and experience of each of those temporalities. Discussion questions should incorporate questions around access and power. For instance, facilitators may ask participants: "Who in your city has the luxury to envision the future?" Participants may note that some people may have jobs in envisioning the futures of others, such as social workers, and prosecutors, or that real estate developers not only have time to muse about the future of Philly neighborhoods, but are paid highly for their speculation. Other discussion questions could center around the ease or difficulty of visualizing certain temporal locations, and how trauma affects those abilities. Participants should be encouraged to observe their communities for ways that the past or future show up in the present, and to be aware of when memories and anxieties crop up. Over the course of the workshop, participants should continuously work on a vision of the future for their self or community, using the exercises to continue deepening their work. Participants may decide to complete a collective art work, or to compile their work into a collected piece. The workshop should incorporate a ceremony that allows participants to showcase their work to their own communities, such as an open mic night or gallery opening. This way, their visioning can be shared with others and affirmed, and the interest in future visioning can spread throughout the community. This workshop could also serve as a springboard for future collective action as it will increase participants' social networks and ability to collaborate with community members. Activists, artists, scholars, and employers can also be invited to participate in the workshop, further decreasing isolation of community members and strengthening alliances with people who have potential resources.

Further development of community futurisms

Given the long, normalized history of institutional racism, genocide, displacement and oppression in the U.S. against Black people, indigenous people, immigrants, women, and the impoverished, academics seem reluctant to characterize the suffering of U.S. citizens and residents in the collective sense. Major collective and historical catastrophes such as slavery, Jim Crow, the crack epidemic, and mass incarceration are rendered completely in 'the past' and best left studied in textbooks, or rendered invisible and disconnected from both present acknowledgment by those in power, and/or solely moral failings of the affected group without any historical, cultural, or other wider context applied (Craps, S., 2013; Akinyela, M., 2002). Today in the United States the masses struggle economically largely due to the tide of neoliberalist economic and social policies that rendered urban centers at the mercy of block grants, sporadic programming, and charity from liberal elites, while lower income rural and suburban communities languish without programs or policies to ease the opiate/meth epidemic and rampant unemployment that characterizes those areas (Galloway, J., 2016). The ahistorical, individualized nature of mental health treatment in the U.S. fails to address how these policies not only act on individuals and families, but the communities in which those families and individuals reside, as well as the subsequent generations that come into existence (López, C., 2011; Craps, S., 2013). Professions such as social work which are predicated on licensure, insurance, accreditation and other structures connected to and dependent on institutions which have perpetuated violence historically and presently on marginalized persons, have little incentive to adopt practices and interventions that directly address the collective effects of chronic multi-generational oppression.

Today, as communities around the United States are facing yet a new phase of transition, trauma, and disenfranchisement as a result of regime change and advancing trajectories of governance and social policy, alternative fields of thought are emerging to inform social work practices that can address collective trauma and subsequent violence and disconnection in marginalized communities. Critical mental health theory

such as liberation psychology outlines remedies to frameworks that are steeped in ahistorical, individualistic methods include upending unequal power dynamics between mental health professionals and communities and respecting and centering the histories and wisdom within marginalized communities (Martín-Baró, I., Aron, A., & Corne, S., 1994).

Further development of U.S. conceptions of community futurisms must reckon with how social work and other helping professions benefit from the capitalist, neo-liberal status quo that perpetuates oppression in marginalized communities. Collective healing practices could also benefit from comparing and contrasting international and indigenous mental health practices that address collective atrocities like civil war and genocide. Where collective atrocities have been legitimized, so have mental health interventions that target the collective rather than the individual. Mental health professions in the United States should explore barriers to political activation and collective engagement philosophically and practically if the root causes of trauma and violence in the U.S. are to truly be addressed.

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What Now



Soraya Jean-Louis



Policing and Resistance in Philadelphia



Arturo Castillon

Origins of the Philadelphia Police

The predecessor of the modern day Philadelphia police was the civilian-run "night-watch," which existed in New York, Boston, London, and other cities. Monitoring the populace from the early 1700s until the 1850s¹, the night-watch was the Northern equivalent of the Southern slave patrols. In 1837 the mayor of Philadelphia declared, "Every colored person found in the street after [the posting of] watch should be closely supervised by the officers of the night."²

Philadelphia descended into crisis with the rapid pace of urban growth in the first half of the 19th century. There was no central city government. The ward territories that made up the city were highly contested political spaces, run by local political bosses and neighborhood ethnic gangs. In this era of "Jacksonian democracy" mobs of white workers rioted in defense of slavery and racism, lynching black Americans and abolitionists and destroying their property. The state responded to this increasingly unstable situation by specializing and centralizing its power.³ The

¹ Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2007), 44.

² Homer Hawkins and Richard Thomas, "White Policing of Black Populations: A History of Race and Social Control in America," in *Out of Order? Policing Black People*, ed. Ellis Cashmore and Eugene McLaughlin (London: Routledge, 1991), 71.

Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) was spawned out of this volatile context in 1854.

The police department recruited youth gangs associated with white "nativist" fire departments and transformed them into agents of the modern state.⁴ In this way the PPD consolidated the fragmented power of the localized ward system into a municipal city government.⁵ In contrast to the ward police the PPD made arrests on their own initiative, for misdemeanors related to victimless crimes, such as public drunkenness, vagrancy, loitering, disorderly conduct, etc.⁶ By the late 19th century it became a regular police practice to arrest people based on suspicion—in advance of a crime.⁷

"Police Brutality" as a Civil Rights Category

Along with discrimination in housing, education, and employment, police discrimination began to emerge as a popular civil rights issue in the early 20th century.⁸ Although black newspapers had been reporting on police violence for decades, it wasn't until the 1920s that the black press in Philadelphia—most notably the *Philadelphia Tribune*—began to regularly report on what was being called "police brutality."⁹ Other black newspapers throughout the country such as the *Chicago Defender*, *Amsterdam News*, and *Baltimore Afro-American* also provided detailed coverage of police violence. Furthermore, all of these newspapers reported on the growing movement to resist racism and police violence.

In nearby Camden the Colored Women's Civic League (CWCL) campaigned against "police brutality." In October 1933 they appointed an investigating committee to report and publicize cases of police abuse and racial intolerance.¹⁰ A few months later in December, in the aftermath of the police murders of two Polish teenagers in Camden, a multiracial coalition was formed between the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), several Polish churches, and the local Socialist Part.¹¹

Spontaneous confrontations in the streets also became a popular form

of protest during this time. In 1936 on South Street—at the time a black neighborhood—a gathering of young people surrounded a white officer after he struck and detained a Luke Carter. Some in the crowd demanded his release, and argued that the officer was drunk. The cop called the riot squad and when they arrived they arrested Carter along with two of his defenders from the “irate mob.”¹²

Then in 1938 another large crowd formed after an officer forcefully removed Florence Slater from the “white only” section of a 10-cent movie theater in Darby. Florence had refused to leave the “white only” seating, and the policeman threw her on the ground and kicked her. Slater retaliated by scratching the officer’s face. The officer overpowered her and

³ Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue*, 60.

⁴ *Ibid*, 61. For a more detailed history of the PPD, see Alex Elkins, *Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, “Police Department (Philadelphia),” <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/police-department-philadelphia/>

⁵ Williams, *Ibid*, 63.

⁶ *Ibid*, 69-70. For a discussion of late nineteenth century white attitudes about the supposed criminal tendencies of black people and the disproportionate representation of blacks in the criminal justice system, see Kali N. Gross, *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880-1910* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006) and Khalil Muhammad Gibran, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

⁷ Cashmore and McLaughlin, *Out of Order*, 71.

⁸ “POLICE BRUTALITY AGAIN,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, 3 December 1931, 16. ⁹ *Philadelphia Tribune*, 30 May 1929, 2.

¹⁰ “New Women’s Club Founded by Camdenites: Colored Women’s Civic League Organized as Non-Political Unit,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, 26 October 1933, 9.

¹¹ “NAACP Joins White Groups in Protesting: Police Brutality Brings Interracial Cooperation in Camden,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, 14 December 1933, 9.

¹² “Irate Mob Threatens Policeman Riot Squad Quells Disturbance,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, 13 August 1936, 3.

¹³ “Movie Attack Stirs Threat Of Mob Ire: 200 Darbyites Seek Reprisal On Cop Charged With Assault JIM CROW THEATRE Picture Halted, Theatre Lights Put On As Resentment Grows,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, 30 June 1938, 1.

as he dragged her out of the theater others followed them. After the officer brought her to the local jailhouse a large crowd of 200 began surrounding the tiny building. Many in the crowd threatened to riot if Slater did not receive fair treatment. The local Justice of the Peace tried Slater on the spot for assault and battery and disorderly conduct, hoping to release her as soon as possible and avert a rebellion. The charges against Slater were dismissed after the white manager of the theater agreed to pay for all the costs of the trial. Several police had to escort the manager back to the theater.¹³ Moments of militant resistance such as these were becoming more common in an era of growing civil rights concerns.

In 1940 a mob of one thousand confronted several police after they fired ten gunshots at three black children in Southwest Philadelphia. The boys had taken off running after a black officer told them to stop throwing pebbles and were chased by nearby white police who then shot at them. The boys were not hit by the bullets but were beaten after the police caught up with them. As the beating took place a massive crowd from the neighborhood of 20th and Fitzwater Street surrounded the officers,



"Yes we..." Credit: Barbara Prachter, Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA (1979)

threatening them with violence if they didn't stop. The boys ended up being released without charges. In the aftermath of the near melee a coalition was formed between the NAACP, the Philadelphia Youth Movement, and the Allied Civic Clubs, while the Superintendent of Police launched an investigation into the beating.¹⁴

In these examples, spontaneous street actions against the police spurred organizational developments within the broader civil rights movement. On the one hand, riots (or the threat of riots) disrupted the process of policing. On the other hand, people attempted to reform the police by working with them. These distinct approaches were related and reciprocal. However, these distinctions also reflected the tension between reform and revolution, between moderate and more radical strategies for social change. This tension was a defining feature of the emerging civil rights movement.

Reforming the Police

Civil rights organizations were trying to catch up to the struggles that

¹⁴ LAUNCH ACTION AGAINST COP WHO SHOT AT BOYS: Thousands Attracted to Scene Threaten Cops—Son of Courier's Philly Editor Beaten," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 July 1940, 1.

¹⁵ "Police Brutality Fought in Phila," *The Chicago Defender*, 25 May 1946, 2.

¹⁶ Mark Hyman, "Protest of Police Brutality Draws Crowd to Meeting," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 15 August, 1950, 1.

¹⁷ "Fed. Action Seen as Way of Curbing Police Brutality," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 12 September 1950, 1.

¹⁸ "Police Directive Barring Brutality Overdue—NAACP," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 30 September 1950, 2.

¹⁹ "Veteran Acquitted Of Police Attack; May Sue In Turn," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 13 May 1952, 1.

²⁰ "Background," *Police Advisory Board: Records, 1958-1980*, Manuscript in Urban Archives of Temple University, Philadelphia: <http://library.temple.edu/collections/urbana/pab-670.jsp?bhcp=1> (accessed 29 April 2011).

²¹ Countryman, *Up South*, 95.

²² *Ibid.*, 283.

were unfolding on the streets. Groups such as the NAACP, the West Philadelphia Civic League, the Philadelphia Committee to Fight Terror against the Negro People, as well as the *Philadelphia Tribune*, all agitated against police violence.¹⁵ In the 1950s these groups began organizing large public demonstrations to air their grievances and demand that police stop abusing their power.¹⁶ Some civil rights activists pressured the government to take action after the FBI investigated two officers and a Grand Jury indicted them in January 1951 for violently forcing confessions.¹⁷ A few months earlier, in September and November of 1950, the NAACP had organized demonstrations to demand that the Police Superintendent issue a directive for officers to stop beating those detained.¹⁸ The NAACP also organized letter-writing campaigns, petitions, and conferences with police leaders.¹⁹

Eventually, the legal fight against police misconduct began to produce some results. Mayor Richardson Dilworth established the Police Advisory Board on October 1, 1958, the first independent agency in the country to hear citizen's complaints against police. The Fraternal Order of Police declared that the board was part of a "communist plot to undermine law enforcement."²⁰ The NAACP took on the first case brought before the board, resulting "in disciplinary action being taken against the officer."²¹ Nevertheless, out of the nearly one thousand cases brought before the board, dismissal was recommended in only one.²²

Philadelphians in the late fifties also increasingly represented themselves in court. In some cases, people got the charges against them dismissed. James Lett, for example, who was severely beaten by three white officers, had assault charges thrown out in 1959 when the police in question failed to show up to the highly publicized trial on five occasions. The NAACP did not represent Lett in court, but they did advocate for him in the press and influenced the atmosphere surrounding the trial.²³ Ethel Lawrence was also cleared of assault charges after she agreed not to prosecute an officer that she and two other people accused of "police brutality" in the press.²⁴

In response to the growing struggle against police discrimination, City

Council President James Tate began to implement more police training and started working closely with the NAACP and the *Philadelphia Tribune*.²⁵ But despite the founding of the Police Advisory Board, some small victories in the courts, and the attendant publicity, nothing fundamentally changed in the relations of power between the police and the policed.

Power in Crisis

At the turn of the decade people became more disillusioned in the ability of the legal system to ensure their safety, and as a result, they became more militant and organized in their capacity to confront the police. In September 1960 four police and four participants in a mob of one hundred people were injured in South Philadelphia after members of the crowd tried to release someone detained by the police.²⁶ Then in

²³ Ruth Rolen, "Victims of Police Brutality Freed, Judge Throws Case Out," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 10 January 1959, 2.

²⁴ "Free Woman After She Vows Not To Take Action Against Officer," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 7 April 1959, 1.

²⁵ "Four Councilmen Blast Illegal Raids by Police," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 14 November 1959, 1.

²⁶ "4 Cops, 4 Men Hurt As Half-Hour Riot Erupts In S. Phila: Youth's Arrest-Triggers Melee; 40 Officers Battle Angry Mob of 100," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 20 September 1960, 1.

²⁷ Fred Bonaparte, "Cop Held For Fatal Shooting Of Chester Boy: 30 Police Quell Riot of 500 At Tues. Wingding," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 1 December 1962, 1.

²⁸ "52nd & Arch Riot Hearing Thursday: 3 Cops Hurt; Youths Charge Police Brutality," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 22 January 1963, 8. "Suspect's Arrest Triggers Near-Riot at 13th and South: Angry Crowd Seethes as Cops Subdue Victim Witnesses Claim Patrol Wagon Was Driven Over Man," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 5 March 1963, 8.

²⁹ Art Peters, "Camera Taken, Clubbed Says Social Worker: Taking Photos In Picket Line When Group Rushed," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 28 May 1963, 1.

³⁰ Maxwell Stanford, Jr., *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960-1975* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2007), 107.

³¹ "Slate Another Hearing for Injured NAACP Pickets: Police Brutality Claimed by Two Duo Arrested; Attacked Law," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 8 June 1963, 5.

December 1962 a rebellion of five hundred erupted on the streets of Chester after the police murdered a young black man named Elmer Ricks. During the street fighting people threw bottles and bricks at police.²⁷ In early 1963 there were also several moments of near-riots as large groups of people in Philadelphia surrounded and threatened police who were beating people.²⁸

The spirit of revolt deepened in 1963 during a campaign to desegregate the construction of a school in the Strawberry Mansion section of North Philadelphia. Hundreds of black workers formed picket lines around the construction site located at thirty-first and Susquehanna Street, where they protested against their exclusion from the construction jobs that were created to build the school. In response the police and white construction workers tried to violently break the picket lines in order to enter the white-only work site. This resulted in violent clashes which lasted for months. Among those who organized the protests were Stanley Daniels and Maxwell Stanford, both members of the Revolutionary Action Movement. Daniels explained how he "was shooting pictures of the line, when all of a sudden these construction workers rushed up and tried to crash through. The police came from everywhere."²⁹ In *We Will Return in the Whirlwind*, Stanford described the move to break through the picket lines as a "flying wedge," which was followed by a barrage of police clubs: "singling out Daniels and myself, twenty police jumped us and we fought until unconscious."³⁰ Three officers, one black and two white, claimed that the Daniels and Stanford assaulted them and attempted to incite a riot.³¹

In the fall of 1963, the radical events of that summer still lingered in people's minds. That October, a mob of seven hundred people confronted twenty police officers and fifteen squad cars after a man was arrested for refusing to clear a corner in North Philadelphia. By the end of the riot the windows of a stalled out police car were smashed and six people were in police custody. A few months after this, the police shot and murdered Willie Philyaw, a handicapped man, and also shot a bystander. This incident sparked a weeklong rebellion in North Philadelphia where hundreds of people fought against hundreds of police. Crowds of people also looted stores along Susquehanna Avenue. Local ministers tried to persuade the crowds to leave the streets.



Florence Mobley, in North Philadelphia in late August 1964, was heard to curse the NAACP leadership and declare to the men nearby: "I'm a black woman. Let them take me." Quote: *Philadelphia Bulletin*, August 29, 1964. Picture, printed during Mobley's trial: *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 19, 1964

³² Henry Benjamin, "Police Car Stalls, Cops Imprisoned In Middle of Near-Riot for Hour: Peacemaker's Arrest Triggers Wild Fracas," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 22 October 1963, 2.

³³ Henry Benjamin, "Philyaw Slaying Stirred Furor: Rioting Vandalism Erupted Along Susquehanna Ave. After Slaying," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 31 December 31, 3.

³⁴ Alex Elkins, *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, "Columbia Avenue Riot," <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/columbia-avenue-riot/#13207>

³⁵ Alex Elkins, *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, "Columbia Avenue Riot," <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/columbia-avenue-riot/#13207>

³⁶ *Philadelphia Bulletin*, August 29, 1964. Picture of Florence Mobley, printed during Mobley's trial: *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 19, 1964.



Police arrest a protester during the 1964 riots in North Philly. Credit: Photographer unknown, Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA (1964)

In a city that was seen as a model for managing tensions between people and the police, the conflict had reached a tipping point. The authorities tried desperately to subdue popular hostility against the police and to limit protests to an acceptable level. In the midst of mounting resistance, the Commission on Human Relations, the Fellowship Commission, and the NAACP worked closely with police to contain the movement and avert a full-blown insurrection. They failed to do so. In the summer of 1964 urban rebellions spread like wildfire, starting in Harlem, New York City, and spreading to parts of New Jersey, such as Jersey City, Paterson, and Elizabeth. This cycle of riots eventually reached North Philadelphia by the end of the summer. As usual, the spark that exploded into an uprising began as a routine occurrence.

On August 28th two officers, one black and one white, tried to pull a woman out of her car and immediately people in the neighborhood began fighting back. This incident escalated into pitched street battles that lasted for three days. Roaming groups of young people looted and burned businesses along Columbia Avenue, a commercial strip in the heart of North Philadelphia. One group threw a garbage can through a squad car window. Large crowds attacked the police and released those in their custody, even pulling them out of police wagons. At the same time, Cecil B. Moore and other "leaders" worked with the police to restore calm.

Women and men alike participated in the rebellion. Florence Mobley was heard to curse the NAACP leadership and to declare to the men nearby: "I'm a black woman. Let them [police] take me."

Over 600 people were arrested during the three days of looting and rioting. One of the two deaths that occurred during the rebellion was that of a rioter who was shot by police. Of the 339 people reportedly injured during the rebellion, over 100 of them were police.

Epilogue

When people resist oppression, they are not homogeneous entities with a single conception of struggle. Black Philadelphians of different social classes developed a wide range of tactics and strategies in their struggle against the police. Distinct approaches combined and diverged in various ways, often in line with class differences. While middle-class leaders usually sought to reform the police, the poor and working classes engaged in battle with them.

As this history suggests, police reform fails to address the uneven relation of power between the police and those who are policed. In light of more recent struggles and rebellions within prisons, in working class neighborhoods and at the border, it should be clear that the prospect of mass revolt is just as pressing today as it was in the past. It is not a distant and far-off abstraction but a moment that we must prepare for in the present. The choice is ours.

School Community Project Lightcone: The North Philly Peace Park Selah Keturah Community School



Creating healthier, organically grown, locally produced, and affordable food options is a critical topic in health communities and is vital to resolving food desert crises in urban areas. As urban revitalization efforts continue to grow in Philadelphia communities, retaining cultural significance in a changing contemporary urban area depends on creating value and community assets. It has been the goal of The North Philly Peace Park to rehabilitate abandoned spaces and grow local produce, and to also offer a pedagogical environment that teaches urban farming techniques and healthy living for local communities. The North Philly Peace Park Selah Keturah Community School will be utilized for hosting classes, events, and workshops while also serving as a pedagogical tool. It is equipped with renewable energy sources, water collection, an ebb and flow hydroponic system, and other urban farming techniques within and around the pavilion. It is the goal of the North Philly Peace Park to demonstrate working methods that can be recreated on private land and within non-private areas that are discrete and non-impactful to housing materials. As urban populations continue to grow and food shortages are becoming more prevalent, it is our mission to see the potential in abandoned land and food deserts to become productive sources of food supply and community building.

Mimu Ina, Yorubic for inner cleansing light, is a cumulation of a larger strategy anchored by the school to garner creative resistance, imagination, science, and technology education. The Selah Keturah Community school functions as a time capsule, a sun dial, and a time machine based on

Afrofuturist and Black Quantum Futurism principles. As urban revitalization continues to grow, retaining cultural significance in a changing environment depends on creating value and imagination. The school anchors the community as an asset- a point in the acupuncture Peace Town Plan, that casts away shadows to illuminate the possibilities of brighter futures. The design is based on 3 concepts: A primary roof structure and open floor plan based on Oshun Temple and the framing of solar progress that animates and illuminates religious symbology along the east axes of the Temple of Edfu. The porch became an American architectural form following the shot gun houses built by enslaved Africans imported from traditional homes in West Africa. It provides a place for leisure, gathering, socializing, and contributes to the life of American urban areas. These typologies are integrated by the African concept of polychronic time, which places one at the center of the experience to move with time. Light cast onto the porch at marked intervals to commemorate historic events of African American history, Philadelphia history, and the history of North Philly Peace Park. The projection of sunlight onto the porch contrasts with shadows to illuminate certain dates marked onto the porch. The porch serves as a calendar and material are selected to contrast each event. Light metaphorically becomes the source of knowledge and becoming. Sunlight passes through the roof onto the porch and extends into the landscape merging the African with the American and architecture with the landscape. The first design roof openings were found using the latitude and longitude of the site which is 39 deg north and 75 degrees West to carve onto the roof the Azimuth and Altitude of the park's foundation date. Dates selected are commemorated at high noon. The cycles of time become realized in the landscape through cycles of growth and rebirth of perennials and annual plants.

Submitted by Nyasha Felder, Designer and Architect

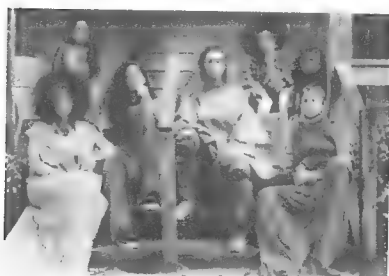
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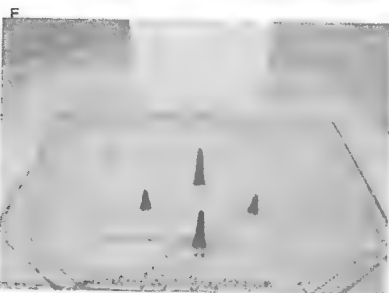
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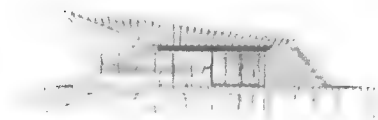
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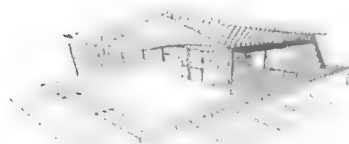


AFRICAN TEMPLE DESIGN



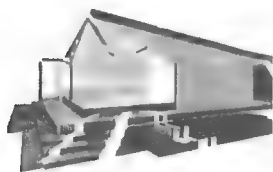
- A. Oshun temple in Osogbo Sacred Grove, Niger.
- B. Temple of Edfu, Egypt.

AFRICAN AMERICAN PORCH TYPOLOGY



- A. Oshun temple in Osogbo Sacred Grove, Niger.
- B. Temple of Edfu, Egypt.

SOLAR PROCESSION



Black Fire



Marcus Borton

Definition for blk/children

A policeman
Is a pig
And he shd be in
A zoo
With all the other piggy
animals. And
until he stops
killing blk/people
cracking open their heads
remember.

The policeman
Is a pig
(oink/
oink.)

Sonia Sanchez

August 28, 1964

Though there were no roosters in North Philadelphia like in Macon, Georgia, she still found herself, daily, waking with the sun. Pure-bred instinct: a Southern woman at heart. By 7 a.m. three meals had been cooked. Two of these meals she wrapped meticulously in aluminum foil, resourcefully saved from the church fish fry a week prior, for the young suitor laid up in her bed. Looking at her sole meal for the day, she considered the ease with which she often found herself doing more for her lover than her own self. It was ok though, she had to keep her figure somehow.

He rustled: twenty years old, twenty years her junior. Northern women had it confused, being ladies in the streets and whores in the bedroom. She was a whore in the street and a lady in her boudoir. Just last week, there he was, proudly walking up the street with his tight black slacks, his massive sex she knew he didn't know what to do with. None of these other women could teach him like she could.

His eyes twinkled when she stroked him on the corner of Broad and Girard, right in front of a blushing white woman exiting a taxi cab who exclaimed, "Hey there, big boy," with a wink.

At age 40, she had finally decided to become herself. Vernon Greene had just been lynched in Macon. When she heard the news, she sucked her teeth, thought, 'I'm tired of this shit,' and packed her bags light to hop a train north.

Freeing herself from the expectations carelessly lodged onto her body, she refused to continue being a mule weighed down, carrying public perception. No longer would she be trapped by the thoughts inside, judging minds that would rather see her die cataloging her recipe box, fetching eggs, and filling her loneliness with bible scripture memorization. The

smile she wore as public facade, her happy drag, etched lines so deep into her face. Only when she cried, in private, her pores could breathe. Her everything was tired of being back burner to everyone else. She was Dorothy Dandridge in *Carmen Jones*! She was Ethel Waters in *Cabin in the Sky*! A leading lady deserving to shine as bright as she fathomed. She was her own stage. The sun and the moon never stopped shining on her, they followed her everywhere she went.

She walked with purpose, switching at the waist, with a plate of buttermilk biscuits and fried catfish, both smothered in gravy. Her opposite hand carried a glass of fresh squeezed lemonade over to the queen-sized mattress in the middle of her kitchenlivingbathroom. Sitting up, he lit a joint, and fiddled with the radio. He turned the dial through static until, "Good Morning Philadelphia, it's going to be another beautiful day today. Temperatures will be getting up to 78 degrees, no clouds in the sky. Here's the new record, 'Where Did Our Love Go,' from the sizzlin' sistas, the Supremes, from their new album being released in three more days!" Steps creaked outside the apartment in the hallway. A group of children rushed out, their brown skin thirsty to drink in more summer sun.

Stepping to the rhythm, she served the plate as if she were Diana Ross as a waitress; gracefully placing the glass on the antique nightstand she found when her train stopped in Washington D.C. It was right by the tracks with gold knobs and topnotch handcraftsmanship. "Baby, baby, baby, where did our love go," she cooed with a beaming smile. Silence.

"I can't stand this new sound," her husky voice reverberated from her soul, it perked the ear with its nuanced richness. "Besides, our love ain't gone nowhere." Her hands moved from the knob of the radio to her Dinah Washington records, she placed the needle on the A-side. She crawled onto the mattress between his outstretched legs, walking her fingers up his tight stomach to slowly circle his sensitive nipples. "I want a rich man, all you poor men have got to go," she harmonized perfectly with the 'Rich Man's Blues.' He ate the food quickly, then ate her slowly.

Navel to navel, intertwined, clinging: he smiled with his eyes at her as they held each other gently in (post) ecstasy. When he laid with her she felt beautiful, because she was beautiful, because she told herself so every day in the way she moved, combed her hair, batted her eyelashes, and rolled her hips. Inside these four walls they were shielded from the realities of their daily lives, able to run free, naked, fully exploring their divine nature. She sat on his chest, taking the joint from the ashtray on the nightstand.

Holding the match methodically, striking fast, the smell of sulfur rose in the air. She created fire. Holding the flame to the edge of the joint,



Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries

watching the edges of the paper crinkle, transform, evolve, the embers grew as she pulled deep. Inhaling chaos, she surrendered to the beauty of the day. "Oh shit!" He jumped up reaching for his pants, realizing he could be late for his second job washing dishes at a hotel downtown in Center City. Shooing him away with her left hand, she took another pull with her right, "Don't bring down my high." He appeared a minute later, dressed in a white shirt and black slacks ironed by her; smelling of fresh starch.

*

Green beans entered worn hands, exiting with ends snapped into a plastic bag for compost. The remaining wholesomeness placed into a tall pot in the center of Ruth Palmer's front porch for cooking with a slab of pork meat. Three black women sat on their adjacent front porches of Columbia Avenue gossiping as people hurried past.

"At the AC-uh-me they have a dozen lemons on sale for thirty nine cents, pawk chahps for eighty three cents a pound, and two dozen eggs for fifty nine cents. You know I couldn't pass up a deal. You know who I saw while in the checkout line?"

"No girl, who?"

"Violet Carter, with a cart full of food. Said Eddie got a new job as a scrap iron dealer."

"He better take advantage of the new jobs before all these Southerners take them. There's a new married couple in my building from New Orleans, with FOUR children! They were walking around without shoes, poor things. Mama drunk in the streets, bright red lipstick smeared on her cheeks. I want to know: is harlot the new style? Let me know."

"I hope not," one responded, putting a lid on her pot, finished snapping her haul.

"Her husband, if he even IS her husband," she continued, "beats her at night, all six of them in that one room. I saw her the other day stumbling down 19th Street. Her shoes were cute though."

"What they look like?"

"Like the shoes on the August Ebony magazine cover."

"I didn't like that Tareytown ad, woman all corked up like a spook. Us Negroes need to have higher respect for themselves, ain't that what Reverend say?"

"Sho' nuff. Our actions display the wonders of the black race and we must carry ourselves accordingly."

*

A kiss on the forehead, and the apartment door shut in his face. Gravity returned, yanking him downstairs. Standing in one place staring at his rough hands, rough black hands, rough black body, disgusting, rough black body. He turned his neck to look up the stairs to the room where his beauty lay. A door closed upstairs, dust rambled on the floorboards. "What you still doing here babe?" she asked, sticking her head out the door. Turning abruptly, "Uh," he stuttered, "I wanted another kiss." Smiling, she ran down the stairs with open arms, wrapping in her soft warmth for what felt to be another lifetime. They exited the house together. He hurried down the steps to catch the Broad Street Line headed south.

"Ain't that Cheryl's boy?" Ms. Hawkins eyed the woman's erect nip-

ples, showing through the sheer fabric of her robe, "That's a damn shame."

"When's the last time you felt the joy of shame, Ms. Hawkins?" she asked simply, without batting a lash. She picked up her coupons and tightened the loop on her robe, "Now, if you need any meat for them green beans, you just let me know. I got some upstairs in the freezer box. Y'all sisters have a blessed day."

"Thank you sister, have a good day yourself."

"I already am," she said, returning into her house, suppressing the "a great one, in fact," she wanted to add.

Returning to the silence of her room, she settled into the silence of the morning, melted into the seconds as they elapsed. Soiled white sheets were on her bed. She removed them, grabbing a bottle of bleach and entering the bathroom. She ran the water hot, pouring the bleach generously. Her robe fell on the floor next to the sheets as she stepped into the bath.

*

North Philadelphia heaved on the exhaust fumes from car mufflers sputtering down the outlined-by-the-Friday sunset. Streets cobbled with trolley tracks carried black folks to any neighborhood of the city they desired. Cars revving, zooming, beeping, honking on the hot asphalt. A young, tall and lanky girl wearing a side ponytail, held up with a neon-green scrunchie, walked through the streets. Neighborhood kids all called her Streetwalker because she never walked on the sidewalk, ever. How she ever got into her house was anyone's guess.

Greg Daverne patted his hair delicately in the mirror of his barber, "I got waves for the babes, curls for the girls." Laughs echoed all around the

barbershop through men young and old. Children danced in their imaginations, wearing Bermuda shorts and sport shirts, throwing mean words in lieu of expensive balls. "That's why yo daddy in prison."

"Fool, we got the same pa."

It was a good day for Elijah Henderson. After months of searching, he finally found a job: a high paying, low stress, great benefits, and hard-to-score job. After weeks of scrounging, as he earned his first check, today was the, literal, payoff. Scents of fried fish, cooked by his beautiful new bride, wafted down 22nd Street as he grew closer to home. They later danced to 'Home (When Shadows Fall),' Sam Cooke at the highest volume the radio allowed.

*

Three queens, a Holy Trinity, sat sipping red wine. "My dear, it's all about Dionne Warwick, the orchestration on 'The Last One to be Lover' was magnificent."

"I like that new girl, what's her name?"

"Aretha Franklin?"

"No, Diana Ross? She's one to watch."

"Hmm, none of those girls are SUPREME to me, besides they'll never top Dionne's record sales."

*

Darkness shrouded the black bodies, yearning for the light of the sun. Moonlight shone like stone. Mothers admonished their children to "get on in this house," and, "don't you backtalk me."

"But Ma, Derek gets to stay out until midnight."

"Don't tell to me about other people's children. He's a hoodlum, the exact type of child I REFUSE to raise. You hear me?"

*

Arms tightly folded, back erect, she stared at her husband without saying a word. Her eyes bored into the side of his head, as the car sputtered south on 22nd Street. "I've been hearing from everybody in the neighborhood about you running numbers and gambling. Spending up OUR hard earned money. Ours, not just yours! My mother warned me about marrying you, and I didn't heed her warning. Good job Odessa, look what your hard-headed ass got, a dim witted wannabe throwing my hard earned money down the drain."

"I thought you just said it was OUR money."

"It is, but when you throw our pearls to the swiniest of swine, then it's time for me to regulate."

"Woman, you maximizing noise you heard from those old gossiping porch women."

"I ain't maximizing, you minimizing. Answer me." Silence, except for the sound of tires rolling on asphalt and chirping crickets. "I knew it. You ain't shit! You ain't gon' be shit, and if you do become shit, motherfucker, you still gon' be just that: SHIT."

"Guess that make you Mrs. Shit then?" he coolly replied, his shoulders flexed as he chuckled. He wasn't studying his wife.

"Oh, you don't hear me now?" she bellowed, with rage in her eyes. Stomping her heel on the brake of the car, it jerked to a halt in the middle of 22nd and Columbia Avenue. "This shit ass car!" she screamed.

"You done did it now. I gotta go get some water for the radiator," he said angrily, slamming the driver's door shut.

"When you get back we're finishing this conversation," she yelled out the window.

"We ain't finishin' shit, Dessa."

She slammed her back into the passenger seat. "Broke ass piece of shit car, broke ass piece of shit man, spending our money like times ain't hard enough. Let me touch a penny without asking, and it'd be an issue. We need every bit we can save, especially now." She sulked and thrashed in her thoughts as the cars behind began to honk. "Go around," she hollered, sticking her head out the window, motioning around with her hands. Smoothing her hands across her linen top, masterfully sewn together with her Singer machine, she began to cry as she rubbed her womb. Life churned inside her uneasily, the news she'd been hiding for weeks draped in loose, summer style silhouettes kicked.

As she sat under the full moon, her monthly marker; she noted her sixth month with no menstrual cycle. She wanted to be sure before she broke the news. Now she figured her husband was undeserving of the special surprise that after several years of consummated marriage, and a miscarriage, they would, finally, be blessed with a child. A modern day Sarah and Abraham of sorts. Wiping her tears away, she hummed, hoping the truth was lies, and his lies were the truth.

Police cars, dispatched minutes earlier from the 22nd District Police Station on Columbia Avenue, parked at the corner. Each step the officer made toward the car was pondered, possessing great thought and determination. "Excuse me, Miss?" he said upon reaching the window, waiting almost an entire minute for the passenger to roll it down.

"You're excused officer. Mrs. Bradford," she corrected. "How can I help you this evening?"

"I need you to move your vehicle."

"Do you think if this vehicle was mobile I would be sitting in this passenger seat looking lovely causing traffic? Does that make any sense to you?"

"Uh."

"No, exactly. So, why don't you go disturb someone else's evening? I'm pestered enough." She turned herself back into the car, waiting patiently. TAP, TAP, the billy club beat against the side of the car.

"Hey man, what you beating on my car for?"

"I need you to comply with my request and move this vehicle."

"Fuck you and your requests, this car can't move baby. So why don't you leave me alone, pretty please? I just said 'pretty please' that's what you want, right? Me to beg you to treat me like a person?"

"I don't think I like your tone."

"You're unsure whether you like my tone? Are you referring to the inflection of my voice, or something else?" she said, intentionally caressing the melanin rich skin on her right forearm in front of the officer.

"Step out the car Ma'am."

Her neck swerved violently to the side, eyes raised with contempt, "The hell if I will. I am not standing on this corner at night to be harassed by a police officer. I know my rights."

"Then I will have to remove you." He reached for the car lock through the open window, pulling the handle open with one swift yank and roughly grabbed at Odessa Bradford. Kicking, she yelled, "Get the hell off of me!"

Shouts echoed from a second story window as the neighborhood reacted to the sight of an officer yanking on the woman, then smacking her with a billy club. "Hey there man, that's a lady," came with a brick flying at the officer. Forcefully gripping Mrs. Bradford from the car, he handcuffed her and walked her to the backseat of the squad car.

"Oink, oink motherfucker, what you want?" a passerby spit at the officer.

Information burned like a newspaper up in flames: "The cops arrested Odessa Bradford." The words elapsing into smoke: "The cops beat Sister Odessa." Mangled and twisted: "The pigs beat a black lady, man. They say she was pregnant!" Objectively incorrect: "Her baby died!" A wild-fire blazed: "The white man is invading our neighborhood, beating our women and killing our children."

Madness, a spark burning darkly. An incandescence so sweet and pure one could only taste it fully by inhaling the night air. Each breath fed a

yearning lust for the ebony embers to glow: a black fire burned. Bodies ran as bricks flew through store windows. Glass scattered on the ground like stars in the sky. Window-displayed store products, provoking the residing community members to feel less than on a daily, became viable targets. Resisting financial claustrophobia, a lifetime confined by the haunting economic disparities. Mothers not being able to afford simple items: twenty eight cents for St. Joseph's Children's Aspirin for a teething toddler. Daily tantalized with goods they were unable to purchase because jobs were scarce. "No work for darkie," a homeless older man laughed hauntingly, stretched on the ground, with his head leaning against a store.

Porch monkeys, trapped in their vermin-infested cages. Big feet walking SLOWLY. Black skin, oily, sweating, dripping torrid lust. Bloodthirsty murderers seeking prey. Soil people longing to return to the ground with its extracted goods: groceries, toiletries, dishwashing liquid, pearl necklaces, mahogany tables, televisions and record players filled the arms of young folks seeking reparations on a warm summer night.

Red and blue lights flashed into the shadows of families huddled together in the dark of their living rooms. Sirens blistered, like hot irons, branding their ears into submission. Frank Rizzo, the police commissioner, ordered his officers to "make no arrests."

Officers stood befuddled, although thirteen arrests had already occurred, the police commissioner would not have made a similar command for a metropolitan area like Center City. Action like this had never happened before. Why let these baboons run free destroying their own community? Negroes all over America were starting to riot in the streets. Had there been an outbreak of drapetomania?

A looter ran up to a pig, snatched his badge, and used it to slice his face. "Let me search YO pockets," he spat venomously, as the officer recoiled, applying pressure to the wound.

August 29, 1964

"This better be important," he murmured gruffly on the phone, his voice groggy from being woken up from his sleep. "Mayor Tate, the Negroes are rioting in North Philadelphia on Columbia Avenue," his aide screamed into the receiver. Within twelve hours, the current mayor of Philadelphia ended his summer vacation in Ocean City. Later that day, he made a press statement enacting an archaic law, 'the Riot Act of 1850.'

"Any persons arrested in relation to the riots will be imprisoned for two years," he read to reporters.

*

Who is your friend?

The NAACP

Why?

We fight for you

"Cecil," his mother replied when her midwife asked if she decided on a name for her newborn baby boy. He had grown into a magnificent Negro man, president of the local NAACP chapter in Philadelphia. He often would pray, "This is ridiculous. God, why doest thou curse me with this afflicted race? My people. My people. Am I to be tested like Moses leading the Hebrews through the desert to watch them rebel at the thought of eating manna which thou hath provideth?"

"Look at Cecil, standing over there with the pigs when he needs to be down here, with us, letting the man know this OUR neighborhood."

Punch-drunk with spirits, the crowd jeered violently at the civil rights activist. This was about taking a stand, by any means necessary. Daily these bodies rested with their hunger on cold floors, surrounded by pests they reviled; yet identified with closely. They were like seagulls trapped in a parking lot: circling over dumpsters when there were seas full of fresh wildlife to devour, warm sands for perching and beautiful sunsets to become one with flying into the horizon.

This moment was theirs to seize, they were in control. Cops filled the streets like stray cats at a dog party and the black people ran free. They writhed in ecstasy as they crawled in the dirt, chasing after fallen jewelry. Three guys, standing on a corner, shared a bottle of moonshine. Riding in the back of a truck with a loudspeaker, Stanley Branche, the President of the Militant Committee for Freedom, admonished the crowd to end, "We don't want any more women or children hurt tonight."

There are those who are lovers of chaos, enjoying the risks of passion, these were those people. Many were contemptuous of their self-appointed messiahs. Messiahs, history informed them, were crucified. The crowd stopped to throw bricks, rocks and glasses at the truck and then returned to gather supplies for their pantries. 2239 Ridge Avenue read, "This store employs 100% Negro help. Don't cause them to lose their jobs." The sign gleamed as if written in the blood of a black lamb, pardoning the spirit of death from entering.

Sweet justice, a holy valiance, twinkled in the blue eyes of the blonde cops. Donuts and coffee were laid out for policeman by the black, neighborhood churchwomen, thanking them for their work in the neighborhood. "It's just a disgrace the way people are acting, those Southerners don't know how to carry themselves." In Mattie Jenkins's kitchen around the corner she echoed the same sentiments, "I move up Nawth for a better life, and black people gon' lost they cottonpickin' mind, running in the streets." The front door of her apartment creaked open, as her son walked in with a Victor television. Mattie's lips circled, not knowing whether to scream in protest or shout for joy.

Derek Washington loved who he was most when procrastinating, hopelessly shiftless; today he was inspired to do something. Climbing to the roof of his building, he took out his gun and began firing on civilians. Later, when he was with his pals they ran to the store they always window-shopped and smashed the window. In darkness, they grabbed as much as their teenage arms could hold. When they saw the National Guards deployed the evening before, arriving at their next heist location, Byron Jackson yelled, "Ayyo, 5-0."

The group began pelting rocks and stones until the cops retreated and the vigilantes ran into the night with their spoils. Having temporarily defeated the police that daily followed them on the street for miles in patrol cars, they stood on the corner smoking cigarettes, laughing at how ugly the girls were in their neighborhood.

August 30, 1964

Mayor James H.T. Tate announced that "law and order had been restored and police were in complete control." The day was empty. No prayers to be offered on knees bent reverently before an omnipotent God.

"You stupid."

"Well, you ugly."

"I can be ugly, at least I'm not stupid like you."

"Well, at least I'm not ugly..."

"But, you stupid though..."

"And you ugly..."

"But you still stupid..."

"But, you ugly tho..."

"And..."

"But, you ugly tho..."

"You..."

"BUT YOU UGLY THO!"

She swung her arm with the force of a catapult pulled back past its tension point, smacking both children with one blow. They both fell backward onto their bottoms wondering what happened. "I'll be happy when these next two weeks are over, and you all can go back to school. My last nerve has been gone since July. Now go in the room and pray." Young looters congregated in attempts to rouse the crowd to pillage again, but the police presence was strong. The spirit of freedom had jumped onto some youngsters in West Philadelphia and downtown at Broad and South. Their eyes glistened with the lust of seeing the black flames dance.

A black parade drove up Columbia Avenue displaying Mrs. Odessa Bradford, still alive with any rumored fetus still intact. After a long day of tarrying, the children briefly went outside. They saw Streetwalker relentlessly stomping the streets covered in shattered glass, a few shards stuck to her knee-socks. As she reached her house, she jumped completely over the sidewalk to her bottom steps.

You could only see her silhouette as she glowed in the setting orange sun.



Credit: Photographer unknown, Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA (1964)

Reciprocity: A Time Banking Project of The Womanist Working Collective



Inception

Established in October 2015 as an affinity group on Meetup, our collective began gathering as a group of like-minded Black women and femmes. Responding to our almost immediate growth and increased membership, we held our first strategic planning meeting in February 2016, following a collective-wide qualitative survey to gather vital feedback from our membership. From this data and ongoing evaluations, we began to shape and expand what was quickly evolving into an intentional Community of Practice centering the livelihood and quality of life for Black womyn, trans women, femmes, and gender variant folks. Today, we continue building around the needs and feedback from our members to achieve our ultimate goal: Black Liberation!

The Womanist Working Collective is a social action and support collective for Black womyn (both cis & trans), femmes, and gender variant folks. Our work unapologetically centers our quality of life and livelihoods through community organizing, philanthropy and self-care.

Our goals are:

- 1 To become a supportive and empowering community network to move past merely surviving, but thriving; prioritizing physical, emotional, moral, and social safety.
- 2 To transition ourselves and our communities into an ecologically just* society.

** Ecological Justice is the state of balance between human communities and healthy ecosystems based on thriving, mutually beneficial relationships and participatory self-governance. We see Ecological Justice as the key frame to capture our holistic vision of a better way forward.*

3. Black Liberation.

Currently, one of our acts of self-determination is our time banking project, which is a practical tool that enables cooperation through the act of exchanging time spent on providing services, pooling resources or connecting folk to new networks of support.

Self-determination means developing solutions to common problems we're facing as a collective. We started our time bank to (1) incentivize membership engagement both within the collective and outside in our local neighborhoods, (2) mobilize the resources we have to meet our own needs, and (3) to divest from capitalism and reinvest in our own systems, people and collective futures.

Time banking divests from capitalism by investing in cooperation and solidarity economies. Unlike capitalism, time banking values all time and services equally: One hour of time = one hour, whether you are a doctor or a stay-at-home parent.

Capitalism has conditioned us to believe people's time is worth more based on how much money they make, how productive they are deemed in this society, and how much others value them. We must divest from this way of classist thinking and the assumption that someone with a higher income or access to more resources is better than someone with a lower income and less access to resources. We must invest in the understanding that we are all inherently valuable simply because we exist, instead of basing our value on what we produce to line the pockets of the ruling class.

In the U.S., and in many other imperialist nations, the wealth of this country was built on the backs of enslaved African and Indigenous

peoples. This means the entire capitalist structure of the U.S. was developed atop the subjugation of these groups positioned securely at the bottom of class mobility. This tragic system does not work if there are not people at the bottom to maintain the concentrated wealth and power at the top, as with any pyramid scheme.

Both during and in the aftermath of slavery, Black communities in the U.S. created ways to cooperate with the limited resources to which they had access. For example, Fannie Lou Hamer's farming cooperative; Frederick Douglass' mutual aid society; Charles and Shirley Sherrod's New Communities, Inc.; and Dr. King's Poor People's Campaign were all acts of self-determination developed to survive and sustain themselves and their communities. Black people used these strategies of mutualism as a means to center racial and economic justice as cornerstones to Black Liberation. To do this work today, we have to talk about our history and remind ourselves to always look back as it informs much of our present day: *Sankofa!*

These are our ancestors. These are the shoulders we stand on.

Fk Capitalism**

The exploitation of our bodies, labor and time continues today while systemic and cultural influences expand to support the decimation of our community's sustainability. Under capitalism, our time is stolen and exploited through both paid labor and our forced entry into the criminal (in)justice system, also known as modern day slavery.

Imagine you're locked up for a *survival crime* like stealing to feed yourself or performing sex work to shelter your family. You now have to pay with your time, fines and court fees to this system. The same capitalist system that creates the conditions in which you are unable to adequately support yourself or your family is now penalizing you for participating in an *alternative economy* to survive and sustain yourself.

Something clearly needs to change, but no amount of band-aids will

fix this wounded beast. This is why we must divest in order to dismantle these systems, targeting the issue at its root.

Time Poverty & Community Breakdown: The Curse that keeps on giving

Capitalism's increasingly neoliberal demands for the working class' labor to be exploited harder and longer on unlivable wages for corporations that strategically divest from our communities and our world's overall ecology, leaves less time for us to invest in our families, friends, community, and local politics. This inevitably breeds distrust, community breakdown and increases mental health issues like depression, anxiety and isolation.

In our society, we value time and labor very differently depending on who someone is and what they do with their time. The eight-hour work shift of a public school teacher is valued much less than a venture capitalist even though the labor of the teacher is for the public good versus the private good (read: greed) of the capitalist. Income and time inequality have a corrosive effect on communities, true democracy and the well-being of society's most economically vulnerable.

Stemming from this system are neoliberalism's *disposability politics* to which low-income and other marginalized groups are highly subject. Disposability politics, coined by Henry Giroux, describes "a politics where the imperatives of the market come at the expense of public life, democracy, and responsibility toward the future (insert foot note: Giroux, 2006). In this society, you are disposed of if you are poor, homeless, disabled, primarily supported by the underground economy, or unable to work/have your labor exploited by this system. Folks in marginalized communities are frequently part of this disposable population as this system does not see them as valuable. Disposability politics are literally the opposite of ecological justice.

Neoliberalism has disposed of members of our communities on a macro scale through nationwide gentrification, neoliberal policies that prioritize the market over the people, devolution of social safety nets like

public health care, subsidized housing and food stamps—which are often necessary to supplement even full-time workers—and other forms of targeted structural inequality and poverty. The impact is that people who are hit the hardest economically and socially are low-income and communities of color; the same populations of which our collective is composed.

Time Banking as an Exercise in Self-Determination

Time banking is an intervention into disposability politics, acting as a type of barter network that primarily uses time and acts of service as currency, which, by definition, values all time equally. Time banking recognizes that everyone, even those defined as disadvantaged or vulnerable, has something worthwhile to contribute. This alternative economic practice values relationships that are forged through reciprocity. As mentioned before, this method of pooling resources, funds and skills is not new to Black folks; there has been a deliberate divestment from ALL things meant to sustain us and create our own systems.

Cooperation via time banking and other types of solidarity economy practices suggests an alternative method of tapping into the abundance of human resources that meets people's needs and promotes well-being for all. It also increases resilience in individuals and communities in order to prevent needs arising, reduces the reliance on capitalism, and safeguards resources for meeting unavoidable needs by strengthening what Edgar Cahn defines as the "Core Economy," or "Family, neighbourhood, community..." [who produce] love and caring, coming to each other's rescue, democracy and social justice."

The benefits of participating in time banking are endless, but here are a few that may resonate with you: It's a friendship primer! Time banking teaches you how to build sustainable friendships with trust, mutuality and support. You may find that the person fulfilling your "request" for a ride to your first ultrasound appointment is also a parent and has a wealth of knowledge you can tap into. It ensures collaboration and resource sharing amongst community members and partnering organizations. It unleashes an abundance of human relationships, time, social networks,

knowledge, and skills based on lived experience that are natural and semi-permanent resources. It creates sustainable systems of support. It emphasizes mutualism over rugged individualism. It creates a sense of membership rather than being a beneficiary or passive consumer—you're now an active participant with vested interest and time. It allows reciprocity to build trust between people, which fosters mutual respect. It builds physical and mental well-being through strengthening relationships.

One of the biggest goals of this project and ongoing practice is to participate, regardless of how small, in the eradication of the systems of oppression. The goal is to "Starve & Stop" through divesting and dismantling capitalism. These are some of the main systems we've identified that can be directly addressed through our time banking efforts:

Divesting from:

- * Neo-liberalism's *Disposability Politics*
- * Imperialism/Colonization
- * Capitalism
- * Rugged Individualism
- * Internalized Oppressions (i.e. Poverty-shaming)

Investing in:

- * Self-determination
- * Increasing collective members engagement & participation
- * Financial **interdependence**
- * Intentional community building
- * Mobilizing community resources
- * Promotes kindness and trust

Much like the overall work of cooperatives, there are certain values to which time bankers are encouraged to adhere:

Values

Asset We are all assets. We all have something to give.

Redefining Work Some work is beyond price. Work has to be redefined. To create "the village" that raises healthy children, builds strong families, revitalizes neighborhoods, makes democracy work, advances social justice, and even makes the planet sustainable is valuable work. It needs to be honored, recorded and rewarded.

Reciprocity Helping works better as a two-way street. The question "How can I help you?" needs to change so we ask: "How can we help each other build the world we all will live in?"

Social Networks We need each other. People joined in shared purpose are stronger than individuals. Helping each other, we reweave communities of support, strength and trust. Community is built upon sinking roots, building trust, creating networks. Special relationships are built on commitment.

Respect Every human being matters. Respect underlies freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and everything we value. Respect supplies the heart and soul of democracy. When respect is denied to anyone, we all are injured. We must respect where people are in the moment, not where we hope they will be at some future point.

How Exchanges Work When members log on to our online platform, they're able to submit a "request" for assistance, services or items or "offer" their assistance, services or items. These exchanges are made with time credits earned by fulfilling the request of a member, community partner, or our collective. Everyone's time is equal: One hour = one hour and one hour = one hour time credit to spend or save.

Member-to-Member Exchanges This is when members exchange time and credits with each other. For example, we have a member who is an artist and who was hosting an art exhibit, but needed help with

marketing. She connected with another member who has graphic design skills, and the designer spent a few hours making and revising a flyer for the artist, and collected the three hours' worth of time credits. Later that month, the member with the graphic design skills who had "banked" three hours then decided to cash in her credits with the artist for help moving into a new apartment and they were both able to get their needs met.

Member-to-Collective Exchanges This is when members exchange time and credits with WWC or on behalf of WWC. For example, WWC needs someone to help us with grant writing and fundraising. A member does this for ten hours per month for us and receives ten time credits, new or honed skills for their resume, and a new professional reference. The member can then use those credits to attend a conference or out-of-state event with us free of charge or simply cash it in for grocery, gas, or a bus card to stretch their budget.

Collective-to-Community Partner Exchanges This is when members of the collective exchanges with a community partner. For example, we're currently in an ongoing exchange with Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance (PACA), in which we assist with communications work (making flyers, social media marketing, writing articles for their blog) in exchange for leadership and organizational development assistance.

We hope to create an effective and innovative economic alternative for folks to transition into, eventually leaving capitalism in its dust and crumbling the entire system because once its base is gone the whole structure falls apart. In our research, we found particularly in "*The New Wealth Of Time: How Time Banking Helps People Build Better Services*" report several examples which illustrates both small-scale and city-wide successful implementation. This groundbreaking report has given us so much of the information we're able to share with you today and inspires us to stay-the-course even when things move slow.

This past July was *Reciprocity: A Time Banking Project of The Womanist Working Collective's* official launch via our Time Banks USA site and some

other support. We're still in early stages of development with getting all of our 280+ members through our orientation and transitioned onto this new online platform, which takes time and a lot of patience.

As advised by our local time banking mentors and online support group, we don't expect to see any real results for at least a year in terms of regular and impactful exchanges since folks seem to be most comfortable initiating exchanges in-person. However, we believe the convenience of having the process streamlined and hours tracked online could work for many of our members, especially those with barriers to physical attendance or participation with the larger collective. There are still many kinks to work out, but we have high hopes and dedication to our divesting and dismantling projects.

Here are three things we've learned so far during this process:

- 1. Find an online platform that is also mobile-friendly, as this will likely be how most people log their hours.** We started with hOurWorld.org's online platform initially, but we found the navigability of Time Banks USA's Community Weaver platform much more conducive and had a sleeker look. However, if finances are an issue, hOurWorld's completely free site may be better for you.

- 2. Figure out how to streamline orientations for your members and coordinators.** After facilitating two nearly three-hour long orientation sessions with fewer than five members in attendance, it was obvious we needed to re-evaluate the efficiency of our training process. As a result, we've recently launched a self-serve online orientation on our website, which allows members to move through the materials at their own pace and then sign-up after they've gotten acquainted with the concept. Additional options we're considering and may work well for you: Have webinar orientations where you walk through the training materials with your members and record it;

Have "pop-up style" orientations at different accessible places around the city which may be more convenient for folks; if possible, include daytime/morning session times for folks who work a third shift or are

just available earlier.

3. Dedicate designated time and space to your banking. Once folks are oriented and begin exchanging, create opportunities for regular in-person interactions. Our general collective events (book club meetings, movie screenings, monthly meetings, etc.) serve as a way to put a face to a name that you may have only seen online. Once that introduction is made and the ice is broken with another member, you're more likely to sign-up for their carpool to the collective's next event.

Conclusion

The very act of participating in this divest and dismantle project is moving towards Black Liberation. Simply by reducing our dependence on this current *imperialist capitalist white supremacist cis/hetero/patriarchal* system we're using "Starve and Stop" organizing tactics. Check back with us in six months for progress updates!

How to Help

Donate by visiting our website: www.WomanistWorkingCollective.org

Resources

[Book] Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Thought and Practice by Dr. Jessica Gordon-Nembhard

[Report] The New Wealth of Time: How Time Banking Helps People Build Better Services

<https://tinyurl.com/NewWealthOfTime>

[Manual] Just Transitions: From Banks And Tanks To Cooperation And Caring

<https://tinyurl.com/EcologicalJusticeByMG>

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Submitted by LaTierra Piphus

Ridge Avenue: From Renaissance to Riot to Revitalization



Faye Anderson

The Sharswood neighborhood suffered death by a thousand cuts. In the wake of the 1964 race riot and opening of the Philadelphia Housing Authority's Norman Blumberg Apartments in 1969, Ridge Avenue from 15th Street to Columbia Avenue (renamed Cecil B. Moore Avenue) became a dystopian streetscape of unoccupied buildings and vacant lots. After a half-century of disinvestment and abandonment, the \$500 million question is whether PHA can flip the script and become part of the solution?

In 2015, PHA unveiled the Sharswood / Blumberg Transformation Plan, a half-billion dollar initiative that includes revitalization of a stretch of Ridge Avenue. Two years and \$22 million later, 57 townhomes have been built at a cost of \$400,000 per unit. In June 2017, PHA began construction of its new headquarters on Ridge Avenue. But as the *Philadelphia Inquirer* architecture critic Inga Saffron observed:



Figure 1 Ridge Home Furniture | Credit: Kayla Watkins

What PHA does not do well is all the other things that make a Philadelphia neighborhood successful - shops, offices, schools, parks, and playgrounds. Yet that lack of expertise did not deter the agency last year from appointing itself the master developer for a vast swath of North Philadelphia between Cecil B. Moore and Girard Avenues, an area it has dubbed Sharswood. ... PHA's plan for reviving Ridge Avenue has too much open space and too few buildings. You can't create a walkable shopping street by dribbling out the retail destinations one per block.¹

If one went back in time - from the 1930s to the mid-1960s - Ridge Avenue was a walkable commercial corridor. Following the influx of migrants from the South, African Americans breathed new life into the white working-class neighborhood. As the demographics changed, the new residents fueled the growth of businesses that catered to African Americans. From the legendary Blue Note to the Crossroads Bar, Ridge Avenue was a retail and cultural district.

Opened in the 1940s, the Blue Note was "the town's swankiest jazz emporium." It was one of a handful of "black and tan" clubs where blacks and whites intermingled on an equal basis. The house band, the Ray Bryant Trio, backed, among others, Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Dinah Washington and Coleman Hawkins. Interestingly, Bryant co-wrote the smash hit "The Madison Time." The song was featured in the original soundtrack for the film *Hairspray*. The Blue Note was in business until 1957.

The Ridge Point was also called the Crossroads Bar. In his autobiography, Philly native and National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master Benny Golson shared an anecdote about saxophonist John Coltrane:



Figure 2 Philadelphia Courthouse Mural, Justice Juanita Kidd Stout Center for Criminal Justice | Credit: Author



Figure 3 Blue Note Jazz Club | Credit: Free Library of Philadelphia Print and Picture Collection

Philadelphia boasted many jazz clubs at that time, and John and I continued to gig often. John, however, soon got a very strange gig. Word came to me that John was working at a club called The Ridge Point. We called it The Point because of the street configuration there, where instead of bisecting each other, three streets crossed—Columbia Avenue, 23rd Street, and Ridge Avenue—such that the shape of the building at that intersection resembled a large slice of pie—much like the famous Flatiron Building in Manhattan. The bar's shape mimicked the building. The bandstand was at the wide end of the pie. The tip, or the point, was the main entrance.

All that was interesting, but The Point was not a bona fide jazz club. Eddie Woodland, a tenor player, usually held forth. Woodland was a "boot 'em up" tenor player with a circus aura, who held audiences in the palm of his hand by walking the bar, with bravado. Crowds loved him, but for some reason, he took a leave of absence. Maybe he was sick. Then word went around that my pal John was playing at The Point, and I knew John wasn't that kind of saxophone player. The Point was definitely not a hip jazz club, and regulars expected every artist to walk the bar. Our families both had telephones now, but I decided not to call John and ask him about his odd gig. I would just walk in during the matinee on Saturday afternoon, without telling him I was coming.

I remember walking to the club that day. The music was clear even from the street, at a distance. First, I heard the persistent loud drum backbeat. Next I heard the saxophone. It was clearly Eddie Woodland doing what he did so well, pleasing the people, walking the bar, revving the crowd. I figured John wasn't there after

all. Another false rumor. Eddie was playing extremely well that afternoon. He was really "on it," as Tommy Flanagan would have said. The sax was hollerin', the joint was rockin'. The groove, though different than usual, had me swaying in time as I stepped in the door.

I could not believe what I saw. This wasn't Eddie at all, but John! John Coltrane was up on the bar at the small end, at the tip of the mud pie, honking, grooving, preparing to go down to the far end and back to the bandstand again. He was cranked up, playing low B-flats, nimbly stepping over drinks like a mountain goat on slippery terrain. He didn't see me right away. But when he came up from one of his low horn-swooping movements, he looked in my direction. His eyes got wide and he stopped right in the middle of a group of low B-flats. He took the horn out of his mouth, stood straight up and said, "Oh, no!" I fell against the wall, dying with laughter. I'd busted him. He was humiliated, but he finished his slumming bar performance.²

If residents were in the mood for a movie, they could see "race films" at the Ridge Avenue Theater which opened in 1919 and closed in 1952. The theater screened films produced by the Colored Players Film Corporation and pioneering director Oscar Micheaux.

On their walk home, residents could pick up fresh produce and other farm products at the Ridge Avenue Farmers' Market, located on the 1800 block. Opened on December 22, 1875, the farmers' market was active until the late 1960s.

The Pearl Theatre was situated about midway from the Blue Note and Crossroads Bar. The 1,400-seat Pearl Theatre opened in 1927. The historic theater closed in 1963 and was demolished *circa* 1970. The theatre showcased black entertainers such as the Nicholas Brothers, Ethel Waters,



Figure 4 Ridge Avenue Theater | Credit: City of Philadelphia Department of Records



Figure 5 Ridge Avenue Farmers' Market | Credit: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

Chick Webb, Ella Fitzgerald, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Duke Ellington, John Coltrane and Count Basie. In March 1931, jazz singer, dancer and bandleader Blanche Calloway had a lengthy residency. Her younger brother, the "Hi De Ho Man," singer and bandleader Cab Calloway graced the stage in September 1931.

Contrary to popular belief, Pearl Bailey was not named after the theatre. She was discovered after winning an amateur song and dance contest at the Pearl. As a teenager, Bailey worked as a singing waitress at the nearby Checker Café. Her larger-than-life image adorns the "Ridge on the Rise" mural on the building where the nightclub was located.

Built in 1891, this Victorian building is one of the last vestiges of the Ridge Avenue jazz corridor. The Checker Café was a place to see and be seen. On May 23, 1935, *Philadelphia Tribune* columnist, the "Negro Councilman," wrote:



Figure 6 Pearl Theatre | Credit: City of Philadelphia Department of Records

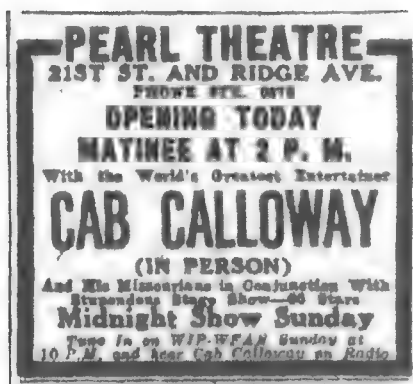


Figure 7 Pearl Theatre Newspaper Advertisement, September 1931 | Credit: Public Domain

When the show has nearly ended you will then see no other than our own sepia Gloria Swanson, who is direct from the Grand Terrace in Chicago and then you can tell the world that you have seen a real show.³

The “sepia Gloria Swanson” was a female impersonator. Like many jazz spots, the Checker Café was about intersectionality before the term was coined. Gay performers were an integral part of the jazz scene. Drexel University professor and jazz fashion scholar Alphonso McClendon noted the ubiquitous use of “café” was intended to convey sophistication. In a letter in support of my ultimately successful effort to block the Philadelphia Housing Authority from demolishing 2125 Ridge Avenue, Prof. McClendon wrote:

The Checker Café (Club) located at Ridge Avenue & Oxford Street is a pivotal institution dating to the 1930s that is worthy of salvation and recognition as an anchor to the Ridge Avenue entertainment district. Without this vital location, the past and current residents who have contributed to the cultural, political and social



Figure 8 2125 Ridge Avenue, Jane's Walk Philadelphia 2017 | Credit: Ashley Hahn

growth of Philadelphia will be less informed and enriched.

2125 Ridge Avenue matters because it holds our stories. Since 1934, the building has been associated with Philadelphia's jazz history. The "Checker Club" sign from the '80s and '90s and the "New Checker Club" sign are testaments to the community's collective memory.

Ridge Avenue was more than a commercial corridor. It was also a safe haven. Many of the businesses were listed in *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, a travel guide to help African Americans navigate Jim Crow laws in the South and racial segregation in the North. Published by Victor H. Green, a postal worker and civil rights activist, the *Green Book* was an invisible map of safe spaces where African Americans could "vacation and recreation without humiliation." The guide listed hotels, tourist homes, restaurants, taverns, beauty parlors, barber shops and other services. Ridge Avenue establishments listed in the *Green Book* include the



Figure 9 Checker CAFÉ (CLUB), JANE'S WALK PHILADELPHIA 2017 | Credit: Kayla Watkins

Ridge Hotel, Butler's Paradise Café, Ridge Cotton Club and Irene's Café.

Black entertainers had engagements in Center City, but they were barred from staying in downtown hotels. Some stayed at the Hotel LaSalle which was listed in the *Green Book* and advertised in *The Crisis* magazine published by the NAACP. Ladies would go to the LaSalle Beauty Parlor to get their hair "fried, dyed and laid to the side." Men could get their hair



Figure 10 Checker Club Signs | Credit: Author

conked at S. Jones Barber Shop. The hotel, beauty parlor and barber shop were located on the 2000 block of Ridge Avenue. The buildings still stand.

The built environment reflects racial inequalities. Right now, the "Ridge on the Rise" storytelling mural dominates the streetscape. As Ridge Avenue is rebuilt, whose story will be told? What story will PHA tell? An African proverb says, "Until the lion tells his side of the story, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." Will the community's past inform its future? Sharswood's social history is connected to contemporary issues

such as gentrification, displacement and equitable development.



Figure 11 *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (1940) | Credit: The New York Public Library Digital Collections

A revitalized Sharswood that respects that which came before is an anti-displacement strategy. At the PHA groundbreaking, Mayor Jim Kenney said, "We can all coexist, but we need to coexist equally, and I think this investment in this spot right now will set down a standard that this neighborhood may change, but it's not going to change everything." We can all coexist so long as getting along does not mean going along with the erasure of African Americans' cultural heritage from public memory. After all, Black Culture Matters.

¹ Saffron, Inga. "Changing Skyline: Philly housing authority brings suburban mentality to Ridge Avenue." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sept. 9, 2016.

² Benny Golson and Jim Merod. *Whisper Not: The Autobiography of Benny Golson*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2016.

³ Negro Councilman, "Night Life and Theatrical Chit Chat," *Night Life* Page. *The Philadelphia Tribune*, May 23, 1935.

Community Project Lightcone: Dox Thrash House Preservation



The Dox Thrash House Project started as a small group of historic preservation students from PennDesign that began an investigation into the neighborhood of Sharswood as a course assignment. Like many neighborhoods in this area it has been in a state of decline since the 1960's and is often written off as "blighted." But by looking past the decay and seeing the rich history and people that make up the community, we encountered a much different Sharswood. We see the possibilities and opportunities in investing in what's already there and want to encourage this. The studio work gave a base for the current project focusing on the Dox Thrash House. After that we applied for a small grant from PennPraxis to undergo a series of small projects that included focusing on the reuse of the Dox Thrash House on Cecil B. Moore Ave. Our team is comprised of former students, now active architects, designers and preservationists.

The Dox Thrash House is one of the many historic assets the neighborhood has to offer, but the only locally protected site. It is emblematic of the rich African American arts and cultural activity that flourished along Ridge and then Columbia Ave during the 1920-40's. Columbia Ave (now Cecil B. Moore Ave) was the center for Philadelphia's version of the Harlem Renaissance at that time, and Dox Thrash was a leader in the arts scene and the community.

The goal of this project is to revive Dox Thrash's legacy of creative entrepreneurship and activism by promoting equitable development

practices at the block level through the reuse of his house and associated sites as community assets. While community discourse surrounding the historical legacy of Dox Thrash and his house is critical for this study, just as important was the need to have community conversations surrounding the possible futures of the house. This building is caught between the past and the continuous narrative of Sharswood that is actively changing the fabric of the neighborhood. It stands as an artifact of an earlier and perhaps greater time and has in some ways resisted the forces of change that are have often been beyond the communities' control. The house therefore presents an opportunity for the neighbors of Sharswood to write a new future on their own terms. In order to facilitate this, our outreach has involved attending physical conversations with stakeholders at Brewerytown-Sharswood Community Civic Association meetings, getting to know active organizations and individuals in the community, and hosting our own community discussions open to the public. Additionally, networking and advertising via social media was also employed during the study.

For the main community workshop sessions we teamed up with *Community Futures Lab* to host a series of community discussions titled "Sharswood Thrash" on March 11 and March 18, 2017. These events had the dual purpose of interpreting the history of Dox Thrash as well as workshopping ideas for how to preserve his legacy into the future. We began with a brief presentation that highlighted who Dox Thrash was and the history of the house and its subsequent owners. This was intended to bring everyone up to speed on his history and also spark ideas and set the tone for the conversation that followed. We then opened it up to the attendees and provided an open forum that generated ideas of possible uses for the house, as well as various ways that the property could be acquired for the benefit to the Sharswood neighborhood. While we had prepared various tools and activities to help facilitate the discussion, we were pleasantly surprised to find everyone engaged and inspired by the history alone and conversation proceeded largely without any formal assistance. This speaks much to the communities' drive and motivation to

not only see real change in their neighborhood but to also play an active role in how that takes place.

The attendees often ranged from leaders of other small organizations who have been working in and around the neighborhood, longtime residents who play active roles in organizing the community, and those who were just curious about Dox Thrash. These focus group sessions enabled us to have long and detailed conversations about the property and while many ideas were derived from it several key themes came out of it. What emerged as most important was spreading the word and just making Dox Thrash known both to the residents and a wider audience. Ideas in this category ranged from setting up activities for kids at the Cecil B. Moore Library to working with schools to enhance arts education.

Another key theme was the need to find a partner both one that has the financial means to protect the property and also a vested interest in preserving the legacy of Dox Thrash like the PMA or working with active African American Artists in the city today. The third theme was tactical preservation tools that could be used to gain exposure or protect the house, these ranged from putting up a historic marker, using the state conservatorship program to acquire the property, or using this as a demonstration project for the Philadelphia Landbank.

While the scope of this report limits the amount of outreach we can achieve, after these initial surveys it was clear that if this project is going to move forward there is a pressing need to bring further community engagement into the rest of the design process. The reasons for this are twofold, first to generate interest and advocacy for the house and Dox Thrash's legacy both to the immediate community and also to the broader context of Philadelphia and perhaps nationally. This hopefully will generate a sense of collective sense of identity in the property and advocacy to save it, and also attract larger funding partners. The second reason is to involve the neighbors in the design process to ensure its standing as a true community asset and ensure its long-term stewardship. It is clear from these small probes that the people of Sharswood have a vested interest in the preservation of this building and they are excited to



Community mapping at Sharswood Thrash event held at Community Futures Lab (2017)



see it put back into active use. In this sense the Dox Thrash house and the legacy it represents can act as a hinge to provide a valuable voice for the community to leverage against the impending changes in the neighborhood.

Submitted by
Dana Rice, Andrea Haley, Maya Thomas and Chris Mulford



Building The X Variable: Artivism with Afrofuturism



Quentin VerCetty

I LOVE THA FUTURE
I LOVE THE IDEA OF THE FUTURE
I LOVE THA IDEA OF SAYIN, WAIT A MINUTE
LET'S MAKE A FUTURE, LET'S MAKE THIS PRETTY,
MAKE IT GOOD, MAKE IT SWEET, MAKE IT JUICY,
MAKE IT REAL, MAKE IT, YOU KNOW SOMETHING
OTHER THAN PRE-PACKAGED BULLSHIT,
I WANT A FUTURE THAT, YOU KNOW IS A PEOPLES FUTURE
Assata Shakur (1987)

For some, the future is low-spirited, looking like impasto layers of dark chiaroscuro clouds hanging low overhead like a baby mobile. For others, it is a silver lining of hope, a sunrise illuminating a limpid morning sky with flowers blooming and birds chattering. Then there are some who because of circumstances and conditioning - the future is ambiguity, a question mark, a pitch-black tunnel that echoes affirmation for pessimistically thinking that in that abyss there is nothing good that awaits oneself. The work I create is for each of those types of visionaries - for the vivid lucid ones and those on the other side of the spectrum. Working within the realms of Afrofuturism



Figure 1 Dance For Her Pride. Digital Print. 2017

as the guiding compass to teach, train, inspire and advise. All the works I create are also educational tools that are meant to engage, communicate, and to liberate minds and open imaginations, both within my communities at home and my global communities abroad. There are three specific Afrofuturistic elements that I utilize in my work. The first is the exploration of fractals. Which is looking at art as a form of technology that replicates itself through inspiration and spreads. The second element is the concept of comprehending and demonstrating that time is a concept that is not linear but rather an intersectional cycle that I call "sankofanology." The third element I employ is a pseudo-scientific concept of a spiritual space called AfriXa, which is only accessible by AfriXin people and how it is a key part of the Afro-future. Through these elements, I teach others how to create not only art, but how to use art as a tool to engage others, spark conversation, thought, and action. This is done through workshops and having community gathering events, or "groundings" as we call it in Canada and throughout the Caribbean and in many Rastafarian inspired or influenced communities in the African diaspora. In either of these occasions partakers learn that they need to either find or reclaim their own "X" variable and use it to improve either their own future or their communities'. To make sense of how this works,

I must first explain the elements in my work as well as the work itself. Then I will give examples of how I use it as a teaching tool that engages the community and encourages community members to replicate and materialize the ideas, processes, and lessons in their respective communities.

The X Variable in AfriXa and AfriXin

"Anything created by Black man is African...If a cat had kittens in the oven, would you call them muffins?" – KRS-One (1995)

Afrofuturism in my creative world is about centralizing content that is rooted in ancient beliefs, traditions and cultures from African people. Although many credit Mark Dery as the one who coined the term in the '90s, from my groundings event in Toronto, it was agreed upon that he merely translated into English a synergy that long existed and was called many different things amongst different people on the continent of Africa. It is also from these groundings that we began to use and explore a decolonized Africa and trying to focus on the aspects that unite and define us. This is where the X variable comes in.

There is a poetic recording that I always share in my presentations and workshops, which was done by Nia Centre of the Arts¹ that I was a part of alongside several Toronto poets. It is an excerpt from a speech by Dr. Reverend Jeremiah Wright, Jr. called *"What Makes you So Strong,"* where he asks Black people about their resilience. At one part, he asks, "...is it something in your blood? Is it something in your AfriXin psyche? Is there something in your AfriXin Soul? Is it something in your AfriXin spirit?" I learned the answer to that question on my trip to South Africa while working with orphan children. The answer was rooted in metaphysics and math – specifically algebra. Although algebra is commonly credited to the Greeks for making the name universal, the rudiments of math and

¹ Nia Centre for the Arts is a Toronto-based not-for-profit organization that supports, showcases and promotes an appreciation of arts from across the African Diaspora

algebra practice are rooted in Kemet (Egypt and Sudan) and Timbuktu (Mali). This can be read about in the *Stolen Legacy* by George James (1976). The text gives a hypothesis of how the Dogon mastered astrology long before modern technology was able to capture anything beyond the mesosphere. It also provides an indication of how the pyramids were not built, but maybe plotted. A lot of that plotting is accredited to algebra, and the use of the unknown variable represented as an "X" semiotic equivalent to the use of π .

Africa as a geographical location is full of mysteries and truths. One such fact is that the continent is the cradle of human civilization, the birthplace of humanity and that Pangea came off of Africa and not vice versa. With such knowledge, there are numerous unknown variables about the people, practices and beliefs that descendants like myself and many in the African diaspora are disjointed from. The first starts with the name Africa – linguistically, it is a proper colonial noun, and it has been proven via ancient scripts that our ancestors did not call the land Africa. The "C" in Africa in Latin or English or any non-tonal tongue tends to be a "Kuh" sound like the letter "K." However, in many mature and older languages like Ge'ez, Ndebele or even Yoruba – these sounds are represented as an X and a more guttural, back of the throat sound rather than just the air bouncing off the top of your mouth palette (Bernd Heine, 2000). Like Malcolm X dropping his last name to represent his unknown name of his ancestors, hence Africa spelled with an X is AfriXa – a step toward decolonization and liberation acknowledgment that seeks to reconnect to that we have denied.

In the 1974 film *Space Is The Place* by multidisciplinary artist Sun Ra he speaks about two spaces in the film one was the physical outer space outside of the Earth's stratosphere but he was really trying to get Black folks to start learning about their inner space. Which is the spiritual or metaphysical cosmos or as Sun Ra referred to as the "dark matter" within. This is AfriXa. Within the Afrofuturism realm, AfriXa represents a multi-purpose spiritual space rather than a geographic location or historical notion. It was first told to me by a *Sangoma* priest in South Africa, who also followed within the Melchizedek order (whose name is sacred and

cannot be written or spoken). During a grounding, he taught me this concept and told me to run with it. Through my travels across the African Diaspora from the Caribbean central and the Americas and parts of Europe, I began to have an understanding and inner-standing of this "X" variable concept and spiritual space that he spoke of. I also began to realize why there were Black people who exist that can't be considered to be AfriXin; as he plainly put it, they killed that portal - the access to AfriXa within. The Garveyite Rastafarian, Chester Higgins, in his 1994 book *Feeling the Spirit*, said, "we are not Africans because we are born in Africa, we are Africans because Africa is born in us." That Africa being born within is the "X" variable. Its existence allows AfriXin people to communicate and interact in unexplainable ways with the beings of the past, present and future. As explained, it is essentially an internal social media and internet for AfriXin/ AfriXan people. One of the key wisdoms that it provides to us is access to the *overstanding* (knowledge) and *inner-standing* (wisdom) of Fractals. Fractals are a self-repeating pattern or system onto itself (Chodos, 2000).

As explained to me from the *Sangoma* priest, fractals also make up our genetics, and it is the best way to explain how eumelanin² Cells duplicate to have more cells working on translating sunrays into energy like a plant. It also explains the process it requires for it to extract vitamin D and other nutrients from the elements around it. Fractals are the reason for Afrixin hair texture being in spirals, naps, kinks or tight curls; they replicate the golden helix, which the continent of Africa is also in the shape of. This is where the metaphysics and math shake hands. But this might make one ask what is an Afrixin? An AfriXin is a pseudo-scientific, pre and post-earth theoretical term used for a person(s) with access to AfriXa. The metaphysical space of AfriXa is only accessible by an AfriXin. Which, grants them access to ancient and timeless synergy and subconscious knowledge of eumelanin and the variety of ways the body can utilize energy (like skin cells and metabolism), rhythm, movement, fractals, the manipulation of vibration, along with the bending and blending of communication as present in ebonics, creole, pidgin, Gullah, and patois.

² The most abundant type of human melanin, found in brown and black skin and hair

Afrixins have consistently and continuously been the innovators and trendsetters, persistently moulding new ways to express themselves and push their human abilities through their own evolution and technologies. I break this down as: AfriXa is the internet, and the AfriXin is the satellite – the connector to this space, while the X variables are the devices we use to search the web. It is through this knowledge that I learned that my work was like my laptop or a device that allowed me to explore my *AfriXiness*, gain enlightenment, learn about the potential of my potential along with obtaining guidance.



With my work, I depict young AfriXins from different parts of the diaspora who have found their own X variable. In figure 2, I made a portrait of *Beast of the Southern Wild* film's actor, Quvenzhané Wallis, whose X variable was southern Gullah heritage, allowing her to land the first few breaks out roles that she had. She later went on to successfully play the remake of *Little Annie*, which literally put the world of Hollywood on its head. This is because she was being ridiculed and criticized for her accent and blatantly told that a little southern Black girl can't play *Little Annie*. To the critics, Annie should be a white freckled face, red-haired girl. Instead of listening to the noise, Quvenzhané, in her interviews, she thanked her parents and the Black community for their support and encouragement for following through. The film was a huge success and her presence and strong will sparked in millions of minds a wide array of the different possibilities of the new

spaces and territories that Black youth can thrive and excel in.

Fractals - Art As Technology: Our Ancestors Invented With A Purpose Beyond Aesthetic

"Some of the smartest dummies Can't read the language of Egyptian mummies." - Damian Marley, Patience. (2010)

The Definition of technology, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is an application of knowledge, a manifested extension of the body and its abilities. An example of this is a computer as the extension of the human brains and their skills to compute and process information and carry messages to a hard drive (the body) to perform action and physical functions. The oldest known human remains are the Omo remains found in 1967 near the Ethiopian Kibish Mountains, dated as being about 195,000 years old. The earliest examples of artifacts or creative expression that we have are also found in Ethiopia, lower Egypt and Sudan. It is safe to say that artistic expression that we now call art originated in Africa, the historical, geographical place. Art today is often seen with dollar signs and for consumption via aesthetic. In contrast, historically, art made by AfriXins was an invented technology as an extension of emotions, ideas and memories – all have a duality functioning as time capsules or like DNA. Art was created to embed messages, to be used as spiritual devices and instruments, or as reminders, operating as AfriXin Ancestors' b.i.b.l.e. – basic instruction / innerstanding before leaving Earth. The pyramids, one of the most popular semiotics of AfriXin creative technology, was often taught by the euro-centric dogma that they were just tombs for the pharaohs. Now in the 21st century we have learned that they could have been satellite stations - sophisticated complexes that could have been conductors of energy like a power plant of its day. They were also temples and had many functions. Yet after being on this planet for 4,000 years, the construction of its architecture is still a mystery to the world. Those secrets lie internally within the space of AfriXa. Their X variable is yet to be revealed to us, which can only occur through the studying inwards, spiritually and outwards, historically.

To understand the pyramids today, what it could mean and how it could potentially function for AfriXin people in the future, we need to understand it's past and origins. This begins with the process of looking at time as a continuum, which I refer to as *sankofanology*. This continuum of time then allows us to start to guise at art created by AfriXin people as having anachronistic value and the ability always to be spiritually relevant. Things of the spirit have no expiration date and exist outside of eras, episteme, and epoch. One of the critical attributes of AfriXins is fractals. In almost all of creations and creative outlets, there is some type of repetitive design – it is in the repetition that codes are implanted, the b.i.b.l.e., or time capsule full of info. This is evident in many of the textile patterns you might find throughout the continent, making up clothing and other items, and visible in architecture and music. But more importantly, art intends to inspire more creativity. Which is why our art is fractals – our fraction of the message, as some elders would say. To get the full fraction, one must study the origins and the roots of the fractal – or, the genesis of the pattern or design. This, like everything, takes time and requires us to look at history, which in the Afrofuturist realm, we refer to as *sankofanology*.

Sankofanology: Time is A Cipher

"You can't hate the roots of the tree without ending up hating the tree. You can't hate your origin without ending up hating yourself." – Malcom X (1962)

One of the many dangers that European colonization introduced to the AfriXin was the falsehood that time is a linear measurement. AfriXin ancestors' *innerstood* that everything alive has its own cycles. Sankofanology is the act of decolonization of one's mind and to become receptive that the past, present and future are not separate entities but rather overlapping dimensions. In the Cosmic Underground Northside (2020)I define Sankofanology as "the study and analysis of pan-African application, practice, dubbing, remixing and applied science of using the West African concept of Sankofa to demonstrate that time does not exist on a singular dimension but rather the African past, present and future are all interconnected and overlaps" (p. 39). The etymology of *sankofanology*

comes from a concept connected to the Akan word Sankofa which in Twi (the language of Ghana) translates as "Go back and get it" (san - to return; ko - to go; fa - to fetch, to seek and take). It also refers to the Asante Adinkra symbol which is represented either by a bird with its head turned backwards taking an egg off its back, or as a stylized heart shape (see figure 2). The bird represents the physical and metaphysical. The dua is spiritual – it is the original heart symbol. It can mean one must learn to forgive themselves and to forgive others. Still, it is also a beckoning for us to look internally – to AfriXa the spiritual realm to bring out wisdom – innerstanding- externally. What we sometimes tend to forget is that everything has a predecessor – cities were once towns, towns were once small settlements, and so on. Likewise, through my work, I try to place emphasis that we must know where we have come from to have a sense of where we are going. This river of consciousness found its delta through my own lived experience, which manifested the art pieces I create.

When I was 14, I got arrested for a gang fight; I was too caught up in trying to unleash my suppressed rage that I forgot to run. After hours of interrogations and physical abuse, I woke up in pain and panic from almost suffocating from the amount of blood I was coughing up and the flood of tears that ran from my eyes while I was trying to sleep. I screamed for help, and mentally I began to question how did I end up here. It was then that a Black officer came to my aid – calmed me down and provided me with water and spoke with me. He pulled out a chessboard, and we began to talk about African history. He made a connection between my poor decision-making to the way I played chess – always making moves without thinking about the future. He explained that our ancestors invented the game to encourage the opposite – to think strategic but community-minded. He said the object of chess is not to kill the other person's king but to make the best choices that will allow you to lose the least of the assets of your kingdom while expanding your territory. As he put me in checkmate, he looked me in the eyes and said, each move should move you closer to your goal – so you need to ask yourself if whatever you did that landed you in here was the best move you could have made. He then toppled my king for me and walked away, leaving me to start thinking about my past, present and future, studying the board

before me and the board within. Eight years later, the work I began to create all became chess moves for myself and for my community. I am aware that I am healing from those moments every time I make the best decision for myself and encourage others. Thus, sankofanology made me realize that I don't have to be defined by my past if I am actively defining my future as all I do in the present is what determines the meaning of both.

My X Variable – creating examples

“Never be limited by other people’s limited imaginations... If you adopt their attitudes, then the possibility won’t exist because you’ll have already shut it out ... You can hear other people’s wisdom, but you’ve got to re-evaluate the world for yourself.” – Astronaut Mae Jemison (2009)

Once discovering my artistic abilities, I wanted to create art that would provoke thought, but also represent people and history. Stories that have already taken place and the ones I felt were yet to be. I studied at an artist institution called Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCADU), where I learned about different art histories and periods along with some theories by and about some artists’ intent behind their work and style – much of which stems back to art being a form of technology that has a function. I discovered that many European art styles and eras were just repeating of that which already existed in Africa and amongst AfriXin history. For example, the renaissance period, which was looking to depict biblical stories and the idealism of human forum – the kingdom of Aksum (Aksum) in East Africa where sculptures were created about form and movement of the ambiguous women and men – two well-known European thinkers, Cubism and Picasso were obsession with AfriXin women and masks of West Africa.

After that arrest and being able to be graced with a pardon and to avoid a charge in exchange for not pressing a lawsuit for the abuse I endured as a minor, I spent a lot of years travelling. From my travels to places like South Africa, Cuba, Jamaica and Mexico, I came across and started to

celebrate the Black presence as art or as a historical monument that was in public. From my travels to Europe, I witnessed how the different artistic styles and idealism of the white human form were everywhere, along with their own heroes, legends and myths. These were considerable attractions in some cities, like the centrepiece of a park, for example. It wasn't until I began to pay more attention to the Canadian and the American residential landscapes that I began to question where the representation and celebration of AfriXin people were in these public spheres. Even the majority Black cities and spaces like Detroit still were lacking representation. This sparked the idea to celebrate our own people depicting them in regal postures, remixing "classical sculptures" and including the everyday person who is leading their life as they see fit, as a future historical part of the future landscape. The work embeds different semiotics and AfriXin technology, creating metanarratives and layers of ideas. Some of these technologies include musical instruments, cultural tapestry and various symbols that came from Africa. This led to my first body of work entitled Galactic Negus.

* Galactic Negus

Galactic Negus was about reimagining and making literal the idea that every black person was a "king or queen." Negus meaning royalty in the Amharic. The works are computer-generated images of 3-dimensional renderings of sculptures that unapologetically celebrate blackness and young leaders or potential leaders of real people of the present, but showing them in futuristic settings as being historical figures or heroes of tomorrow. This use of sankofanology allows the viewer to perceive an anti-oppressive future where the statistics are a celebratory part of the physical landscape. A space where different living beings from different parts of the Earth and beyond can see and appreciate, but also celebrate the contributions done by those in the past, whose actions are still useful in the present.

I started the series by using myself as my subject (see figure 3). I am depicting myself with cyclops glasses to say I have a singular vision that I control. I then have the body of Athena the goddess of wisdom, courage,

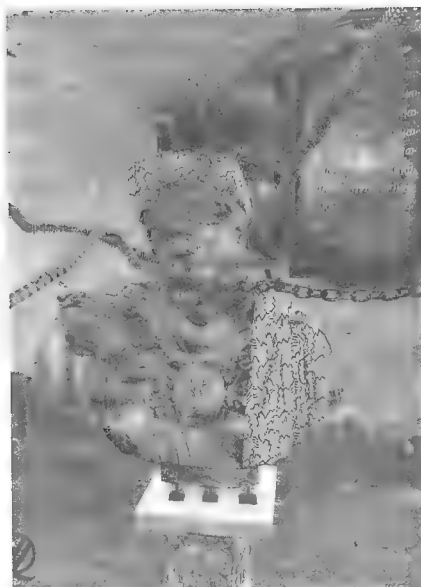


Figure 3 - Baba Garvey Feeling Like Ezekiel ~ Metaw, Ayew, Geza. Digital Print. 2015

inspiration, civilization, law and justice, strategic warfare, mathematics, strength, strategy, the arts, crafts and skill. My mouth is open to represent that I am an outspoken individual, and from my mouth, I am spewing out a variety of things - or I am swallowing it, depending on your perception. Behind my imaginary bust, I had "Africanized" the words of Julius Ceasar, I came, I saw, I Conquered - Veni, vidi, vici and translated it into Ge'ez (Ancient Amharic) which reads as - - - -

- - - - - [Metaw, Ayew, Gezaw]. This choice was to highlight that as an AfriXin, I was speaking my victory over my struggles in the colonial

institution. Mentally, I was going through the most challenging and stressful time in my creative life, I was on the verge of completing my undergraduate degree when I felt the need to validate myself through my work. Creating this art piece took a spin on my mental health and my self-esteem. It was nominated for several awards, and I use it as one of my main parts in various workshops.

Digital Futurities

From Sculptures, I wanted to highlight the AfriXin creative technology of using musical instruments and dance as a form of communicating messages and ideas, besides, to highlight how it was the B.i.b.l.e. of our ancestors. With this work, I really wanted to make the sankofanology in my work more evident. The digital futurities combine my painting, drawing, graphic design and digital sculpting abilities to make

photomontage mixed media digital collages of scenery where everything is in motion. In figure 3.2, *Balafon Dube* is showing the balafon music instrument, which has its origins in Mali, West African and is the parent to the Piano and Xylophone. The instrument traditionally belongs to a griot family. The family would collectively document history and events with the music and dances that are produced through the bala (the player and the wood). Here in this image, we see children from different places, spaces and time all together enjoying the vibes. The purpose of this work is to show even though the balafon is an old instrument, it still appeals to young spirits and spirited. Its anachronistic value will continue because of the vibes that it gives and has, which cannot be easily replicated by digital or synthetic sounds or technology. With this work, I usually use it as a way to encourage others to do research on things from the past that they see still existing in the future and to think of different ways it might change, as well as how our interactions with it or approaches towards it may change. As an example, I wanted to learn how to play the balafon instrument, which I purchased, but to find a teacher or class was almost impossible. In the near distant future would love to see in the balafon become a part of schools' music classes. Mainly because of its syncopated polyrhythmic structure that contains a lot of X variables. As it sometimes changes throughout some songs, but still moves in a cycle or loop. Which, is not linear like "classical music," but instead, it is very alive like a conversation and yet can be improvisational like

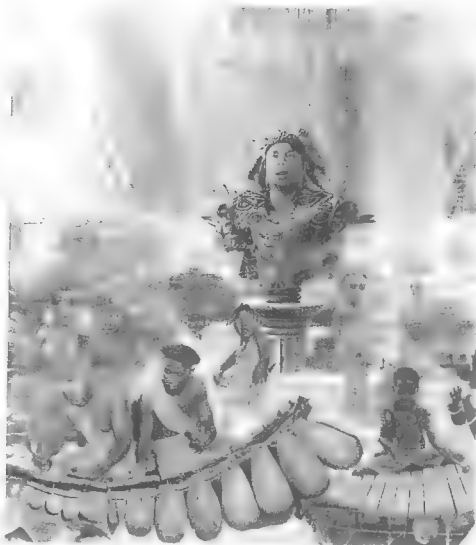


Figure 4 *Balafon Dube*. Digital. 2017

nature.

Building the X Variable

"Imagination, devotion, perseverance, together with divine grace, will assure your success. Knowing that material & spiritual progress is essential to man, we must ceaselessly work for the equal attainment of both. It is only when a people strike an even balance between scientific progress & spiritual & moral advancement that it can be said to possess a wholly perfect and complete personality and not a lopsided one." - Emperor Hailie Selassie, 1956.

Art is a portal. It is a great tool to use to talk about a variety of ideas, feelings and issues. In some spaces where AfriXins and blackness are undervalued or despised, often Black or a descendant of AfriXa and Africa

can get distracted by the present circumstances. Like chess, some just think about the next move and not how having a long-term vision can help beyond the next step. Thus, I use these three specific elements of Afrofuturism, AfriXiness - Fractals - Sankofanology, in my work to then use three forums of community engagement to inspire and provoke. These three things are making these ideas accessible in the public spaces, encouraging others to create art using the three elements, and having spaces where likeminded people can network, build and take things further.



*Figure 5 Mississauga Celebration Square.
Mississauga, Canada March 2017*

PPDA – Positive Public Display of AfriXins

For the nature of my work and for who the work is for, I feel like it mustn't live just in a gallery, but anywhere and ideally everywhere we are, especially where we live. Thus, I try to show my work in shopping malls, libraries, schools and community centres. It is in these spaces that the future takes place; it is where the children's imaginations can be ignited when they see these works they begin to think - imagine – seek to learn and maybe take-action. One of my notable public displays was showcasing in Mississauga, within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The initiative was called *Black Sauga Voices*. I created a minute-long animation that played on loops in the library. Then scenes from the animation, along with six other art pieces, were shown on four jumbotrons at the celebration square - the heart of the central library, city hall and the museum complex. It was in rotation with city advertisements for a duration of just over 30 days. By the third day of my work being displayed, I was contacted by parents, teachers and business people who were all concerned that the Black youth had all these questions, and they had no clue how to answer them.

The work was seen by close to 10,000 people or more. For the first time, people began to think about the future of their landscape and how art can not only help to push for respect and inclusion but generate conversations about ways we can work towards an anti-oppressive future. I believe this starts with having people see our value today, to appreciate tomorrow, but that begins with Black people first finding the benefit of our own X variable within. For some people, this creates a self-discovery, and for others, it must be taught and guided to be honed and owned. This is the reason why I use my work as an example of what you can make, and then I teach them the essential elements of how one could make their own.

* Workshops: Engaging the Imagination

I have a lot of years of teaching experience and have even considered teaching as a profession in a college, but one thing I know, no matter what type of learner you are or think you are, everyone learns from their own



*Figure 6 Free Your Mind Workshop.
Toronto, Canada. May 2017*

example. Hence, I believe one cannot really engage with actualizing a better future without trying to think of different ways to create one of your own. With Afrofuturism, one is not only thinking about the future but one where AfriXin people and their intellectual property - from culture to land are respected, valued, at point of focus and are not represented in minor details. Through the three elements that my work focuses on, I either do a lot of discussions, scenario exploration or create visual art pieces.

My favourite thing to do is collage making, as that is the best way to make the correlation between representing AfriXiness or AfriXin people with Fractals and sankofanology. In one of my art-making workshops, I had students create a collage using magazines and old newspapers. They would have to tell a story about the future in any way they can. This automatically requires them to use whatever knowledge they have or understand to be of Africa/AfriXa, to look at the past and envision the future to create something meaningful and conceptual. From there, we create more art, like write poems, based on our visual manifestations. Another option is to have discussions about what we created, why and how it makes you feel. Both options plant two different seeds, but often bears the same fruit - the desire to learn or develop more ideas about the future. One of my most remarkable workshops featured a particular behaviour class of grade 7 that consisted of a majority of girls. The class was labelled as low achieving academically, yet the work they created were all intellectually, artistically, stunning and astonishing, not just for their age, but in general. It was a reminder not to underestimate the power of art and the power of the imagination when they are engaged

and stimulated.

*** Groundings – events that bring the community together**

In my come up as an artist, I always longed to see and hear Black artists just unapologetically talk about their AfriXiness and celebrate it. Since I didn't see much of it, I created these spaces for those who valued it and desired or needed it. The idea of power in numbers is precisely what these groundings (community gatherings) are about. I first started by doing art events that featured just my work and music. Still, then I began to join other group shows and eventually started to collaborate on creating experiences. One such example was co-curating and co-organizing the Black Future Month Annual Afrofuturism Art exhibition in 2015 with Danilo McCallum at OCADU. I helped to coordinate the conversation, dialogue and space activation aspect of the event. This then led to my involvement with the Black Speculative Arts Movement (BSAM) and launching a large convention in Toronto in 2016. The focus of the event was dialogue around these coded fractals that different folks have been creating not just within Afrofuturism but also in surrealism, fantasy, horror, dance, theatre and across various mediums and artistic genres. In the event, I tried to include space for youth and children to show their work and to be able to be part of the conversations - not just to validate them and their ideas and contributions, but also to make it



Figure 7 Black Future Month 3015 Annual Afrofuturism Art Exhibit Opening Reception. 2015

transgenerational as well as accessible and inspirational to all.

Fahward Ever Backwards Never

A very popular phrase in Jamaican patois is fahward ever, backwards never. The "fahward" part is important as "fah" means far – so it is a way of the speaker to say they are determined to not give up and strive to go a long distance for a long time. Although as clearly outline by the phenomenal work of the Afrofuturist Affair with the Black Quantum Futurism theory, time is a colonial concept. Sankofanology outlines this by showing way that we are not separated from the past or future. Through such ideologies it allows Afrofuturists and AfriXins to remember that there is still a mothership moving and, in that motion, we can build, destroy or repair. By teaching this interconnection, we then understand that selfishness is not an option and that we are responsible for one another. It is through fractals, our self-repeating innovative spirits, that we can create change. AfriXin throughout history recognizes that the future can always change, but we, in our actions and energy, have the X variable that determines the type of tomorrow there will be. The fractal aspect is essential and means that we must keep on creating, innovating and carving out spaces and possibilities. It does not need to be explained that many hands work against the progression and enlightenment of AfriXin people at home and abroad. There is an imbalance in the current world that I write from. The youth feel it, the adults are wary of it, and the elders try to warn us about it. Thus, I use Afrofuturism as a tool to encourage forward, or fahward movements of progression in thoughts manifested internally and externally. When I make my work accessible through murals and community spaces, the positive public display of AfriXin can change a personal perspective and attitude towards AfriXin, whether they are one or not. It is in workshops, the engagements of the creative spirit that we learn that we can contribute to change in the future. From events and groundings, we can share, break bread, and build upon our own ideas or others. None of it is for selfish gain, but rather for selfless evolution. This is evident in the BSAM events in Canada and the United States of America.

In Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993) book, the main protagonist is a scribe for her spiritual belief in which she says very profoundly "All that touch you change and all that you change, changes you." Afrofuturism is the lens I encourage many to use to see the change that we can bring about and shall bring out when we find our X variable and hone it. Whatever a person's particular x variable is, it is through that unknown that one will find a new world and new possibilities to move *fahward*. (Y)our future lies within the greatness of the unknown – the limitless black hole, the very potent and rich potential of dark matter of one's inner space. It is with hope that neither of let time overlap us before we begin the build that introspective connection.

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The First Gate



Jason Harris

A *Temporal Transruption* - this is the process of accessing parallel realities through the intentional placement of events and cultural mnemonics; mnemonics designed to create social portals through which community members can access desired outcomes.

We invite you into this conversation by stating we do not live in agreement with the accepted time lines of our collective reality. The dates, days of the week, the marking of hours, minutes and seconds are only indicative of the hegemony wielded by those who subject us to their consumptive whims, relegating our existence to that of mere mule or meat. The abbreviated lifespan/expectancy of our community members, be it through individual corporeal chronologies or the dominant culture's euro-normative delineation of events (pregnancy, birth, transition, mourning, work, rest, worship) all form barriers preventing our communities from existing in a liberated state.

We actively seek to create *TRANSRUPTIONS*- events, processes or spaces that operate outside the rules of dominant culture but align with natural rhythms of the universe, forming the basis upon which community that meets the needs of our people can be built. In the current space in which we exist, Transruptions serve as a respite or a healing space from the trauma that our current reality inflicts upon our people.

The existence of such spaces, process/ritual and people that offer respite from the unrelenting, malformative systems that characterize the

presence of white supremacy in Black communities will be mapped through the following narrative/story that marks the beginning of rites of passage for a young Black male child in Baltimore. Herein is an exploratory story that posits a time where these processes and spaces will operate as cultural portals to prepare folks for the rigors of the world.

We are all men "on" this mountain, but we strive to become a Man "of" this Mountain.

There are seven gates to "The Mountain": the street, the suite, the circle, the lab, the castle, the farm, and the school/Shule.

Each gate corresponds to the physical stages of DNA regeneration that takes place every seventh season during the first 49 seasons of life. The gate represents the level at which a normally functioning male can optimally operate in society.

Everyone has their seasons and their gates. Mama said she and all the women go to the ocean. My cousin Stef is Trans*; they go to the river. I had to go to the mountain and pass through the gates.

Each gate had tasks:

At first gate you should be able to cross the street, not talk to strangers, read a sign, go into a store, pay for something and count your change correctly.

At the second gate, you should be able to operate in the same manner as a business man, wear a uniform (proudly), make deals, see and take advantage of opportunities, and in general, expand your world.

At the third, you should be able to hold your own physically in some shape or form, size up your opponent, and strategize a way to defeat him. You should also understand how to accept a setback gracefully and then push through it and reach your

goal.

At fourth gate, you should be able to solve a complex problem and make a solution for it, and or work with a team to create a solution.

At the fifth gate, you should be master of your domain, and have established your family, circle, or tribe.

At the sixth, you should be able to speak to the land and animals fluently, and read the tide, the clouds and star paths.

At the last gate, you should be able to speak of these things and demonstrate them, and move in and through all of the gates of the mountain. It is then that you become a Man "Of" the Mountain.

The paper didn't say it like that, but that was how I was told by my Baba.

My Baba, my Uncles and my Brother said other things about it too:

"These are the gates that await you." "The age at which the gate is unlocked is not necessarily the age which you will pass through it." The one that I heard the most was, "Your journey is your own but you are not alone."

When I reached the proper age, the paper appeared on our doorstep. It wasn't a note from school, a letter from the city or anything like that. It wasn't until the third time the paper showed up that Baba decided it was my time.

I asked my Baba, "So how do I get to the mountain?"

"You have to cross the street to get to the mountain."

"Where is this street?"

"In the park." My Mama rolled her eyes. "He's going this time?"

Mama didn't like that we had to go into the woods.

"Yeah, this is the same season that Tre went, so..."

It was a market day for Mama, which meant it was a market day for me when they took me to the park. There were work days and market days; some parts of a season there were more work days and other parts there were more market days. It depended on what you did; since my Baba was a farmer, he had mostly work days this part of the season, but today he said he would rest since I was going to the mountain.

The sun had been up for a while when Mama and Baba dropped me off at Westside Memorial park. Mama held me tight and didn't say anything. Baba said, "He'll be back before you know it. He knows what he needs to do." Baba and I did a soul shake and he pulled me close and patted my head. I was already excited but now I felt that this was important, because Mama and Baba didn't treat me like this when I left the house to go to school. For seven nights before this day, Baba had given me instructions on getting through this gate. I knew what I needed to do, so I waved and walked into the grassy field at the front of the park. The first thing to do was look for the man in the red coat. He was easy to find; he was standing at the corner of the field where two streets crossed in front of the park.

"Looking sharp there youngster, where are you headed today?" He has deep, clear skin like Mama and bright eyes. I was wearing clothes that I usually wore to go outside with my friends and play. I thought I was supposed to dress up like this was a festival, but Baba said this wasn't a celebration, even though it is important. This is just the way of things and this was work; since I am still early in my seasons, there was no uniform for this, but I needed to be ready to sweat. So I put on my running pants and a top before we left the house.

"I need to get to the mountain so I can cross the street. How far is it?"

"Oh, so you are here to walk the path you say?" The man's teeth were bright too.

"No, I need to cross the street."

"You can go back to the entrance to the park and do that, youngblood." Chuckling.

"Noooo, the street on the mountain!" I was ready to get to the street.

"Look here, he knooooow where he going, and saying it with a little bass in his voice!" dipping with his hands pointed behind him when he said "knooooow" all drawn out and to no one in particular. Then he was serious again.

"Okay, so like I said you want to walk the path...the path to the mountain, to pass through the gates, right?" I nodded affirmatively.

He leaned in and looked me in the eyes. "Are you prepared?"

I knew what to do when this question was posed, so I reached into my pocket, pulled out four pennies and gave it to him.

He smiled, pocketed the coins, patted his coat and started walking.

Westside Park is big; you can be in a completely different neighborhood and you will pass the park, albeit on a different side. It is dense, verdant and known as equal parts notorious and mysterious. I could never understand all of this talk about a mountain when I could not see one jutting up above the endless expanse of trees.

I didn't say that though as I followed the man in the red jacket through the brush, as he navigated a path, and I am being generous calling it that,

deeper into the park. Despite the shade of the canopy, it was humid and warm. Bugs zzzzed about my head and I moved as briskly as the foliage would allow, hoping to leave my tormentors behind. The man was unfazed, and I couldn't understand why he was so cool. "Aren't you hot in that jacket?" I asked ahead. He didn't even turn around, just kept moving at a pace such that I had to jog to keep up. The words to repeat my question were on the tip of my tongue when he said, "This is a uniform. I have been doing this job longer than you would care to know. I'm not hot." He stopped and whirled around, "I'm cool", now flashing a smile that confused me. I wanted to ask 'Are we close?' I felt that was not the right thing to say, so I kept my mouth shut and kept jogging.

A path appeared. We were still in the woods, but I began to hear snatches of traffic; light pushed through the treetops more and more, and the loamy smell of the forest gave way to the distinct cocktail of brick and beams, asphalt and grease, garbage and smoke. But there was no mountain to be seen. I looked up to see if I would finally catch sight of it, but all I saw was sky. I remember my brother saying "I looked on the web to see if I could find the mountain in the park on a map. Couldn't find it, B." Then he laughed and said, "but it's there." We talked about the mountain regularly but didn't know that it was the mountain we were talking about; it was this amorphous thing like the "they" in "they said".

I realized that the man in the red coat was gone but there were other men standing in the clearing. Actually, they were standing on the side of the street closest to me. The street could have been any area downtown; tall buildings and stores with revolving doors, and sales signs and people walking briskly on either side. It was certainly out of place for a park. I went over in my mind what my big Brother said; "don't talk to strangers and if you see someone you know, don't expect them to talk to you."

The men were loud. One man was smacking his hands together while he yelled. "THAT AIN'T WAH HAPPEN! I WAS THERE, YA FEEL ME? DOONIE SWUNG AT THAT NIGGA FIRST!" The men around him erupted into a cacophony of recriminations and insults.

There was a woman walking down the street and two other men were standing talking when she walked past. The men said something to the woman and she rolled her eyes and kept walking. "See you don't even need to be like that..." and they said something Mama and Baba would be angry with me for saying. The men cackled until an elder woman walked up to them, pointing her walking stick. "I KNOW YOUR FAMILY DIDN'T RAISE YOU LIKE THAT, KHALIK! AND YOU TOO, SHELDON!" The men lowered their faces and apologized. "You right, Mama Denise, I'm sorry."

There was a man standing away from the group with his back to me, facing the other side of the street. I walked up next to him to get a better look at the street. I had crossed the street by myself at home, but always with my Mama, Baba or one of the elders watching me. This street had more cars, more people and was wider than my street. Baba had said, "You need to watch the cars on your side of the street until there is a big space or no cars coming, then cross to the middle, and do the same thing again- watch the cars until you have time to cross."

There was a bunch of traffic, so I didn't want to cross just yet. The man was still standing next to me, and I asked, "What time is it?"

"First off, we don't call it time, so you shouldn't either. It makes my head hurt when someone says that..."

"Well I have to get across the street and get home before night falls. I am passing through my first gate today."

"Congratulations. I am sure you will do fine. Are you prepared?" He smoothed out his bright tunic, which contrasted against his deep skin. He favored the man in red; they could be brothers.

I realized that this was **the** man in white. I pulled out four pennies and handed them to him. He nodded, stepped out into the street, looked both ways, and moved across, with a bit of a gimp, as his walking stick clicked on the pavement. When he reached the center island in the middle of the

street, he looked back, waved and smiled. Now it was my turn.

We had been sitting still for a long time- Baba was teaching us to count heartbeats. "This is the best way to keep track of your day. Whenever I feel my day getting away from me, I stop, count my beats and if they are moving too fast, I take the moment to slow it back down to normal."

"But what if you running from a dog?" The memory of my Brother talking about walking home from market with his friends and being chased by a stray was fresh in my mind.

"That is a situation that makes the decision for you, but there are many situations where we need all our senses to make a good choice. If your heart is beating too fast, you begin to make decisions based solely on safety, or appetite."

"Your heart beats fast when you are hungry?"

"Sometimes, if you want something, yes. So it's better to count your beats and cool down your heart."

I took a deep breath, counted my heartbeats and looked up, and the island in the middle of the street was empty, but I was ready.

The street seemed quiet as I stepped out on to it to cross, but I was not fooled. I didn't want to repeat my Brother's mistake: "I thought it was empty and a car came out of nowhere and almost hit me. The driver honked his horn and yelled at me too. Look and listen before you step out."

That car sure 'nough was there, and it zoomed past after I spotted it and stepped back. Another car pulled off from a parking space and sped off too, but I saw it. I reached the middle island with no problem. From there I could see why some people had trouble getting to the other side of the street; it was full of distractions, in particular an ice cream truck, a huge open grill, a circle with people dancing, street preachers, salesmen,

even two men rolling on the ground fighting.

I pushed all of that out of my head and repeated the steps I took to get the middle of the street. There was more traffic on this side, so it took a bit longer to find a gap and cross, but soon I was on the other side of the street.

"SHOR-TAY! Come here for a sec!" It was a deep skinned, burly man hollering in my direction. I was looking up, trying to find the sign that said, 'mercado callejero'. "I know you HEAR ME SHORTY". I started moving in the direction opposite his voice and I felt a hand grab my arm. I pulled away and ran, almost stumbling into the dance circle. There was a girl in the middle of circle, older than my brother, but not a woman. She was wearing yellow jeans and a matching shirt, and her hair was shaved on the sides and standing straight up in the middle. Her wild mane shook as she strutted around the edge of the circle and stopped in front of me. She threw her body high into the air backwards, twisting and turning until she landed on the ground in a split. The whole time, her eyes seemed locked on me. The crowd went wild and she started kicking her legs in the air in time to the beat that was pulsing. Her kicks went every which way and after each she would pop up and say "Ha!". The crowd started chanting this with her as she began spinning in front of me and stopping with the "Ha!" She popped up, smiled at me and held out her hand. I was a good dancer and I loved this beat, but this was not the Mercado Callejero, let alone the gate. I smiled and stepped back and the girl's smile vanished.

I pushed through the crowd and kept moving down the street, hearing steps behind me until I bumped into someone by accident. The steps behind me stopped too. I had bumped into a man; he was huge, big enough that he could be the mountain. It was the man in Black. He didn't say anything, just looked down at me from atop his long black tunic and looked up towards a sign. 'Mercado Callejero', it said. He looked at me, and held out his hand; I gave him four pennies and walked into the market.

While the street was busy, the market was packed. It looked small from the outside, but it was vast, and there were people in every aisle, carts bumping into each other, some yelling. Loud music played over head, and screens flashed with information about products, news, and mindless distractions.

"You have to bring back one thing to prove that you made it through the first gate. It doesn't have to be big; actually, it's better if it's something that you can easily carry. What is important is that the thing you bring back must have a purpose for you or someone you love." This was the last thing Baba told me the night before my journey. I thought about gifts. Should I just get something for myself? I checked my pocket and I only had eight coins left. I knew I needed four coins to get home, but what could I get in the store that would be four cents?

I walked through the aisles, searching. The grown people were all busy packing their carts full of things; food, gifts, gadgets and more. I searched until I passed an aisle and saw a boy my age standing in front of a shelf. I backtracked and walked down this aisle and looked at the shelf when I was near him. There was a small sign on top of the shelf that said, 'Gifts for Home!' Beneath the sign, I saw small packages of items, none of which cost more than 10 cents. The boy was holding a small package of shea butter. "How much is that?" I asked. "It's 5 cents, I might get it for my sister, because she comes back from the ocean ashly all the time, and my Uncle said it was good to bring something for somebody else if you are going through your first gate...."

"I'm going through my first gate too." I replied. Your journey is your own but you are not alone, I thought. The boy fiddled with the shea butter before putting it back on the shelf. "Yeah, this was easy. I might bring something else back. I might get some of that meat out there and bring the bone back. I'm hungry."

"That meat is going to cost more than 5 cents."

"Yeah, but I know this dude out there and he said he was going to hook

me up, if I came back out there."

"He's family?"

"Naw, he is a friend of my cousin's."

"I don't know, that sounds like a stranger to me."

"He's cool. He said he hangs out here all the time. Come out there with me, and we can both get something to eat."

My heartbeat quickened. I was hungry, but a friend to him may be a stranger to me. I wasn't entirely convinced that the guy who had the food was a real friend to him.

"I am going to eat when I get home." The boy shrugged. I moved in front of the shelf and started searching. I didn't have enough for the shea butter, which I would have purchased for my Mama, but I saw something that my brother needed for his next gate, his second. I pulled the tin of mint leaf wafers off the shelf and checked the price. Four cents. I looked around for the boy and he was making his way down the aisle; the burly man who yelled after me outside was at the end. "AY SHOR-TAY, THERE YOU GO, COME ON WITH US AND GET SOME OF THIS FOOD!"

I immediately moved towards the front. The line for the one register in the store was long, with at least two dozen people waiting impatiently to have their things rung up. The boy and the man followed me down the aisle towards the front. "SHORTY, YOU CAN COME BACK AND GET THAT LATER. WE BOUT TO GO EAT!"

The woman at the register was moving like a blur, and she stopped to look up from what she was doing. "I told you to stop coming in this store," she said to the man, who sucked his teeth. "LOOK HERE, I KNOW HIM, AND SHORTY RIGHT DERE IS HIS FREN. WE BOUT TO LEAVE ANYWAY. COME ON SHORTY." He reached out for me and I moved away.

The girl picked up a phone and said, "Hey, he's in here again trying to snatch two boys." In a flash, the Man in Black appeared, and the crowd parted as he moved towards the register. I looked around and the man and the boy were out the door. The Man in Black looked down, nodded at me, and walked towards the front door.

"Baby, here, what are you buying?" the woman said to me. I put the tin of mint wafers on the counter and placed four pennies in her hand. The person whose things were on the counter scrunched up their face but one look from the woman and they sighed and stood aside. "First gate?" she asked. I nodded. She smiled. She placed the tin in a small bag with a receipt, and handed it to me. "Now, instead of going out the front, go to the back of the store and you will see a sign for the bathrooms. Between the bathrooms will be a Black door. That is another exit that will get you where you need to go. Safe journey, hon."

I walked through and out the door, and the light outside made me shield my eyes. When I was able to adjust, I looked around and wanted to yell. It was tall; in fact, it was huge- how could something so big not show up on the map? The mountain must be alive, because it knows how to hide, I thought, focusing on the scene ahead of me. The mountain spread out in front of me and looked and felt like it held the whole world on its slopes. There were trees going for miles in every direction, and there were gaps where crowds of people were immersed in a myriad of things. But from where I was standing, everything seemed to be pointing the wrong way; it felt like I was near the top of the mountain.

"You made it through!" It was the man in the red coat.

"Where did you go?"

"I am just around for the 'this' and the 'that'. You gotta do the rest of the work." He was smiling again.

"How tall is this mountain? And how did I end up on the top? I

thought..."

"How do you know this is the top? This is the bottom."

"How can the bottom be up?"

"Who says this is up? I say that the top of the mountain is down there." Those bright teeth flashed again, as he laughed. I was confused. A mountain that points down?

"So if I get to the bottom, I mean, the top, will I still be able to see the sky?"

"Of course, the sky is always going to be there, just look up."

This was too much. "I don't understand how up can be down and the top can be on the bottom."

"As you gain more seasons, it will begin to make sense. Your seasons are not arranged in a straight line; they have structure and cycles that are based on the path of your life. You need to pay attention like you did today if you are going to continue to progress. That is how you make it through all the gates. Today, you did very well. Your Mama and Baba are proud of you. You ready to head home?"

I was hungry, and my feet were a bit sore from all the walking. I nodded and handed him my final four pennies. He shook them in his fist and put them in his pocket.

"Here is how you find home." Another crazy riddle? He saw the look on my face and patted my shoulder.

"What does dinner smell like when your Baba is cooking? What do you hear outside your home? A dog barking? Is there a tree that you like to climb?" I thought about it and all of these things converged in my mind.

Just ahead on the mountain was a path that broke off to the left. There were flowers like the ones Sister Gabriela had in her yard, orange petals with a deep center. I started towards that path and the man walked with me. "Good, you picked that up quick. This is how you find your way on to your path- you look for the things that are familiar to you." As I moved further onto the path, I could hear a ball bouncing and my brother's voice. I didn't have far to go before I emerged into the yard where my brother and his friends were playing ball. I thought about the man in Black and the boy in the market and hoped that he was okay.

"Damn, when did you show up, B?" One of my brother's friends spotted me standing on the edge of the yard, watching. My brother broke off from the game and ran and hugged me. "You passed the gate, ha! How did you like the mountain?"

I shook my head. "It is crazy. Did you eat dinner yet? I'm hungry." The smell of a grill wafted through the air. My brother gave all of his friends a hand slap, and turned around to leave with me.

"Let me see what you bought." I pulled his gift out of my pocket. "Breath mints, since you said you have to talk to a lot of people when you go through the second gate." He laughed and opened the tin to taste a wafer as we walked around the side of the house. Mama was across the street talking with Mama Gabriela. It didn't take me much to resist the urge to run without thinking. I walked slowly behind Mr. Steve's bus, looked both ways, and ran across after a car passed. I was through the first gate and home.

Black Female Engineer: Her Afrofuturist City

To change the world, build it differently



Natalie-Claire Luwisha-Bowditch

As a structural engineer, I design buildings and infrastructure that people use everyday: for work, home or entertainment, places of worship and transport networks. These structures allow society to operate in an organized manner. Structures by design influence our day-to-day activities, and our interactions with each other.

Through Afrofuturism, I have realized that to create change we have to be part of the solution. Being a black female engineer, I have an opportunity to be part of our future cities. By influencing the way in which structures are built, the black narrative can be expressed through innovative and diverse design solutions. In the same way that we use technology to transform our social environments, we can also use it to change our physical ones. Through structural design, I have an opportunity to contribute to the future, as the buildings I help create will exist for decades, or maybe centuries.

Rather than being generalized by the past, we can create a new story—one that focuses on innovation. It's about changing our black experience and creating a new history, one filled with phenomenal visual and physical features. By being involved in careers, communities, and campaigns that are working towards building our future, we can contribute to the development of our lives and cities.

To me, Afrofuturism also means being able to express my true self and embracing every aspect of who I am: an aspirational, young, black female

engineer. I want to leave my mark on the world through my work, and I want to inspire other black females to be encouraged to do the same.

As my understanding of Afrofuturism increases, I am able to relate it to my life. I can see that it's about sharing, celebrating, and presenting your talent with the world. Afrofuturism impacts my working philosophy, making me more intentional about my actions and prompting me to think about my part in creating our future.

As a result, I am now more aware and conscious about what I allow to influence my life. I have learned that there are many different expectations and narratives put on black people—labels that we feel the need to fulfill. I'm now better able to view things differently, especially those aspects shown in movies, music, TV, and on social media. The Afrofuturism movement encourages me to think about myself not just as an individual, but as a designer of a future I want to live in.

Technology greatly affects how the black experience is presented to the world. Afrofuturists are using it to both highlight the underrepresentation of black people, and create a new vision of what the future will be, all the while inspiring young black people to contribute to it. Being an Afrofuturist means countering the stereotypical labels used for black people and taking control of our story by adding new dimensions. Afrofuturism allows us to come together and tackle the problems that black people are facing today with new ideas and solutions.

What does an Afrofuturist city look like?

Engineers like myself are working towards designing future cities that are more suited for the people who live in that city. It is essential for engineers, architects and environmentalists to have the citizens participate during the process of creating solutions. There are many different issues that need to be addressed when building and developing a city, those of which are unique to each group of people, specifically the black population. It is imperative that the urbanization of a city meets the needs of its people.

Some questions to consider are: Are their needs being satisfied? Is the city efficient enough to cope with the changes within the black community? And how can we effectively use the collection of this data to accurately predict the changes that will occur in the future?

These questions need to be answered by the citizens themselves, hence the importance of including the people. By addressing these important issues, the design of future structures within a city will be directly influenced by the people. The success of an efficient city heavily depends on the joint effort between the people and those building the developments.

Collaboration and partnerships are crucial to the advancement of an afrofuturist city, by giving the people the opportunity to create change they gain the power to be part of the solution. For an afrofuturistic city to thrive we should look at how the black community can create a change within their own communities. We should focus on the importance of having role models for the younger generations to look up to. And make certain that they have the support, guidance and mentorship they need to create a better future.

This type of design process, through collaboration, creates a city that is customized for its people and their needs, thus improving social integration and economic growth.

One solution developing throughout many countries are "smart cities", a response to the rising populations and constantly changing cities. Smart cities aim to integrate digital technologies, intelligent design, and communication systems into every aspect of infrastructure to address issues such as energy use, public mobility, economic growth, and security.

This act of balancing social, economic, and environmental demands lies at the core of sustainable design and engineering. Our predicament as structural engineers is that, although there are many economic constraints, the most critical factors that affect our future are environmental, seconded by changes in society. We need to design and build sustainably, and make it easier for society to live a more sustainable lifestyle. The people are part

of the solution in creating a more sustainable future.

Building sustainably only solves some of the environmental problems; an additional consideration is needed as to how we produce energy, and in turn consume it. Generating sustainable energy is the answer, by incorporating renewable technologies like wind turbines, tidal power, solar power, geothermal resources and even the use of landfill gases to generate power.

These types of technology create an opportunity for local and individual energy production. This shift enables the consumer to become a producer, hence the birth of the *prosumer*, a term that describes the production and consuming of energy by the people.

However, in low-income and deprived areas, such technologies are not accessible or affordable to the people, and without financial aid from the government or private sectors, it makes it very difficult to implement these solutions. Long term commitment and financial investments are needed. Some of the black communities have ended up in these areas due to the discriminatory placing of black people in such derelict areas, through housing agencies.

Alongside this financial assistance, periodic monitoring of these technologies and how they affect the citizens of the city is pivotal to ensuring long-term benefits.

Some beneficial ways in which the citizens themselves can be part of the change is by conserving energy in buildings. Energy efficiency should first start from the construction of the property, and then be continued by its residents. People can also implement habits such as recycling or reusing, and reducing their waste. A cultural shift is needed in the way in which the citizens live out their daily routines.

Conserving energy and reducing waste can easily be managed in a smart city. Systems that provide water and electricity can be monitored and adjusted in response to a change in demand. Electricity is renewable,

and conserved with the use of energy-absorbing thermal materials with the ample use of natural light.

Afrofuturist engineers can also look to the African continent for all kinds of inspiration for sustainable urban construction, from the contemporary to the historic.

An example of this is in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia situated in Eastern Africa. The city utilizes sustainable building solutions which were developed by the Ethiopian Institute of Architecture Building Construction and City Development (EiABC) and students from the German university Bauhaus-Universität, Weimar from 2012 to 2014. These experimental homes have been designed and built to address the hyper-urbanization occurring in Africa today. They worked together to create innovative solutions that supply sufficient living space, are sturdy and are easy to maintain. The homes were designed with respect to the social and cultural norms:

"The proposed way of building and the simple design promotes economic, cultural and social sustainability by respecting existing ways of living while introducing improved contemporary housing standards."

The structures are erected in a joint effort from the contractors and the inhabitants possessing the necessary skills to do so. This process encourages the people to build homes that are suited to their needs.

Although these structures may look simple, the method of including the inhabitants during the construction stages, as well as the sustainable materials used for the buildings, can be an inspiration for us to learn from. The collaboration of people, design and construction methods, led by the people's social and cultural needs, can result in economic, adaptable and suitable homes for the people.

Another major area of innovation that we've already seen across Africa is social and participatory mapping, where new communities take it upon themselves to map their neighborhoods and businesses.

Maps are vital to cities; without them, citizens have severely limited access to the most basic of public services, such as running water or the collection of garbage. One example of participatory mapping that's worked successfully is in Tandale, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

These maps have led to a rapid improvement in the services that residents can access, and all it took was a mobile app (using software from OpenStreetMap and Ushahidi). People can record bits of their district and highlight points of interest, including things that need improvement or repair. Best of all, it means that everyone gets an address.

We call this the "data-ification" of the city; we see it as a shortcut to achieving the kind of smart cities that current developed nations have, without the long-drawn infrastructure. A similar development is happening in telecommunications, where many African nations are skipping the step of laying physical phone cables in favor of mobile networks. It benefits future African cities by integrating the lessons that developed cities have learned while under the strain of new demands. Newly developing cities can easily incorporate the resulting technology into their designs as the infrastructure expands.

Visibility and Inspiring Others

There's a lack of diversity in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Out of all the STEM sectors, engineering has the lowest percentage of black women. There are various social reasons for this, one being the lack of visibility. Young, black girls are not seeing someone who looks like them in a male-dominated industry, and this creates a barrier for many. To change this, the visibility of women of colour is critical to inspiring the next generation.

Inspiring young, black women is something I am passionate about. By being visible and sharing my story with others, I am able to encourage them to become who they aspire to be, and to pave a way which is less travelled than others.

By being part of organizations that empower, celebrate, and support young women, I am able to be part of a cohort of women creating platforms for black women to create their own narratives.

Highlighting and celebrating the work of successful black women is crucial to empowering the next generation, so that they too can create change. One example of this celebration on social media is through the #blackgirlmagic campaign on Twitter used to showcase excellence, culture and trailblazers, featuring amazing black women from around the world. Another campaign that is highlighting black people is #itooamharvard, created for the students of Harvard to have their voices and faces seen. This campaign tells the world of their stories and experiences as black students at Harvard.

The Afrofuturism movement is like an awakening for black people to see the role they have to influencing the future. I have realised that we, as black people, have a vital role to play in our future experience. We need to step up and become the creators of that future. This is particularly critical in the STEAM sectors: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics.

And this circles back to my understanding of Afrofuturism; that as black people we should take part in creating our future. Encouraging black people to create new structures is just as crucial for changing that future as it is for changing the technology, visual art, music, fashion, movies, and other representative media we see and encounter on a daily basis.

Links to sources of information:

<http://www.archdaily.com/773014/students-confront-hyper-urbanization-in-africa-with-trilogy-of-experimental-homes>

<http://explore.ramanitanzania.org/>

RESOURCES



Excerpt of Oral Histories/Futures Interview Questions

Community:

What does the word community mean to you?

In what ways do you feel connected to your community?

What does the word home mean to you? What does it look like to you?

Sharswood-Blumberg / North Philadelphia

How long have you lived / worked in Sharswood?

Was it always called Sharswood?

What was it like when you grew up here / first moved here?

Do you remember the Columbia Ave riots?

How do you feel about the eminent domain and what has happened in the community?

Displacement

Do any of the people you knew growing up (such as childhood friends, family members, etc.) still live in your neighborhood? In North Philadelphia?

Are you aware of opportunities to be a part of the development of your community?

How has the culture of your neighborhood changed, if at all?

Housing

Describe the home you currently live in. Do your close relatives have a similar (or different) housing experience?

Do you feel comfortable in your home? Why or why not?

Do you think you, or other people in your community, have a choice in where you live? Why or why not?

Visions of the Future

What are some things currently present in your community that you would hope to continue to see in the future?

Growing up, how did you envision your future self? Is it different from the person you are now?

How do you envision (your respective community) in 10 years?

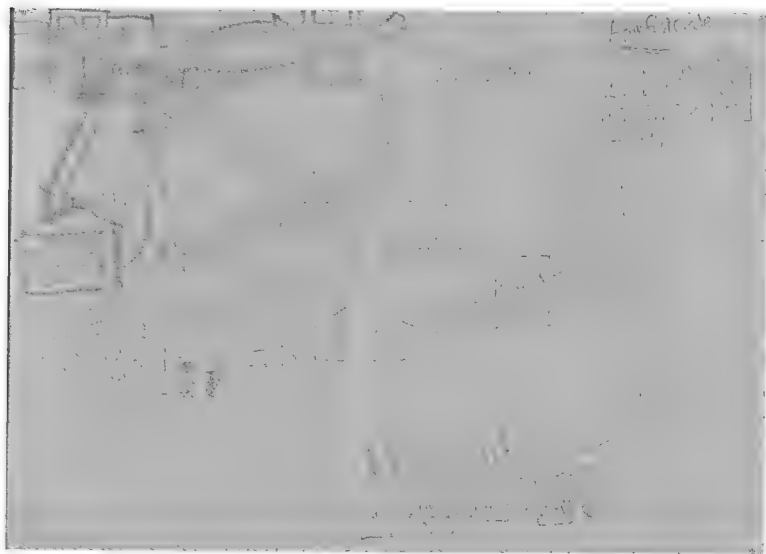
What do you see as the future of Sharswood?

Time/Temporality/Space

How important is time to you? Your family? Your community?

For you, what does it mean to be "on time"? Is this different from how your family would define it? Your community?

When you hear the word "past" what comes up for you?



Housing Journey Mapping, Community Futures Lab (2016)

Sharswood Online Reading List



To Share other links and resources, please contact us at communityfutureslab@gmail.com. This list will be updated on our website.

Music and Art

"The Bird Cage Lounge was one block up at Ridge and 16th Street. I don't know whether it was named after him, but Charlie "Bird" Parker played there. The legendary Pearl Bailey began her singing and dancing career at the Pearl Theater, which was at Ridge and 21st Street."
<http://phillyjazz.us/2015/12/07/ridge-on-the-rise/>

"Within eyeshot of the five-way intersection at 23rd Street you would have found half a dozen jazz institutions with smooth names like Spider Kelly and The Point. But today, the only flash from the past is an old "Bar" sign that swings in the light breeze."
<http://aldianews.com/articles/local/philadelphia/lost-and-found-jazz-philadelphia/38554>

"In the early 1900s, the Pearl Theater, located at Ridge Avenue and north 21st Street, was Philadelphia's "premiere colored theater." Here, black Philadelphians could see the best African-American musical and vaudeville performers from across the country."
<http://explorepahistory.com/displayimage.php?imgId=1-2-DE4>

"The hub for it all in North Philadelphia was Cecil B. Moore Avenue — then Columbia Avenue — between roughly 12th and 19th streets. The stretch was home to some independent businesses, but it was most notable for the dozen or so small clubs that dotted it. Most of the performers were African-American. Some were stars, but a whole lot more were



up-and-comers with a whole lot to prove.”

<http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/philadelphia/96762-revitalization-stirs-up-memories-of-a-time-sharswood-pulsed-with-all-that-jazz>

“On June 14, 2013, the Philadelphia Historical Commission added the Dox Thrash House to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, protecting it from inappropriate alterations and unnecessary demolition”

<http://www.preservationalliance.com/endangered/dox-thrash-house/>

"Born in 1893 in Griffin, Georgia, Thrash fought in France during World War I and studied at the School of The Art Institute of Chicago between 1914 to 1923. After his Chicago years, the artist lived for a time in Boston and New York (during the heyday of the Harlem Renaissance), before settling in Philadelphia around 1926. In 1937, at the height of the Great Depression, Thrash joined Philadelphia's government-sponsored WPA Graphic Arts Workshop as a seasoned printmaker with a taste for experimentation."

<http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/2002/48.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/doxthrash.house/>

<https://philly.curbed.com/maps/updating-the-curbed-philly-preservation-heatmap-now-with-endangered/dox-thrash-house>

Buildings and Businesses

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ridge_Avenue_Farmers'_Market

"Black social groups formed throughout North Philadelphia and theaters like the Uptown and later the Freedom, both located on North Broad Street, promoted musical shows featuring gospel, jazz, and other types of performances aimed at African American audiences. North Philadelphia also became a center of black activism as the area's African American residents fought for better representation and working conditions and against redlining practices that refused housing loans to individuals who lived in areas deemed to be "high risk." Nevertheless, white flight from North Philadelphia led to increased segregation in the area during the 1950s and the 1960s, decades that also saw the shuttering of many of the factories that North Philadelphia's residents had long depended upon for work. Each factory closing increased stress on neighborhoods already marred by poverty and growing racial tensions. A low point for North Philadelphia came in 1964 with the Columbia Avenue Riot, which arose out of conflicts between police and North Philadelphia's African American community. The riots resulted in hundreds of injuries, arrests, and looted businesses, many of which never reopened."

<http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/north-philadelphia-essay/>
<http://explorepahistory.com/search.php?keywords=columbia+avenue>

Paramount Shoes [https://woodmereartmuseum.org/experience/exhibitions/john-mosley-photographs/paramount-shoes -](https://woodmereartmuseum.org/experience/exhibitions/john-mosley-photographs/paramount-shoes-)

Transportation

"Wilson's photos depict a city that in many cases looks little changed from the 1950s—or even the 1940s in certain shots. The corner stores are still open, the neon bar signs still lit, the glass in the factory windows still intact. Yet we know now that these neighborhoods were on the brink of massive social and economic change. The slow decline in population that began in 1950 was about to accelerate, and many of the streets we see in Wilson's photos would soon become a shadow of what they once were."

<http://hiddencityphila.org/2014/05/capturing-late-1960s-philadelphia-trolleys-neon-cobblestones-and-all/>

Historical Images

<https://libwww.freelibrary.org/hip/HIPLst.cfm?srch=3&subject=Sharswood>

Maps and Atlases

<https://www.philageohistory.org/rdic-images/index2.cfm#:62::GHJ1875.PhilaWard20::>

Civil Rights and Activism

"Malcolm X moved to Philadelphia in early March of 1954, fresh off his success organizing Temple 11 in Boston. His brief was to energize Temple 12, located at 1643 North Bailey Street, now home to the Holy Ghost Crusade Church. The FBI already had Malcolm under surveillance, and noted his arrival in Philadelphia. One file states that he quickly registered as a longshoreman on the waterfront."

<http://hiddencityphila.org/2011/11/malcolm-x-slept-here/>

"The historical marker is important because 2503 W. Oxford Street is a place where history happened. Malcolm X lived there for about six

months in 1954. To be clear, the house does not meet architectural standards for historic properties. Instead, the building has significance in the cultural characteristics of Philadelphia and is associated with a person significant in the past. The building also exemplifies the political, social and cultural heritage of the African American community. What happened at 2503 W. Oxford Street laid the foundation for what is now one of the largest populations of African-American Muslims in the country.”
<http://hiddencityphila.org/2016/02/breaking-through-historic-preservations-color-line/>

“The design includes classroom space for 35 students, solar panels on the roof, an off-the-grid bathroom, a space for healthy cooking demonstrations, and a farmstand where organizers can sell produce and value-added products like pickles to fund farm operations.”
<http://www.philly.com/philly/living/sharswood-garden-north-philly-peace-park-francis-kere-tommy-joshua.html>
Malcolm x house proposal

Columbia Avenue Riots

“Amid the chaos of three days on Columbia Avenue, you can see the birth of the two social movements that would come to dominate Philadelphia for much of the next half-century. One was the push for black political empowerment, as African-Americans abandoned timid cooperation with the white political machine and forged their own path, on the streets and later at the ballot box. The other was the quest from the white working class for “law and order,” as a deputy commissioner named Frank Rizzo took control of the riot squad, then the police department, then City Hall.”
http://www.philly.com/philly/news/Gathering_.html

<http://explorepahistory.com/displayimage.php?imgId=1-2-1710>

<http://hiddencityphila.org/2014/08/ruminating-on-lost-columbia-avenue/>

<http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/TODAY-IN-PHILADELPHIA-HISTORY/The-Philadelphia-race-riot-of-August-1964.html>

"But they had a good fight, a good battle there. And I think that there was something gained but we didn't appreciate the roughness of it, but it had to be done. It had to be done their way, you know."

<http://hiddencityphila.org/2014/08/when-columbia-avenue-erupted/>

<http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/link-packages/72064-50-year-anniversary-north-philly-riots-1964>

<http://northerncity.library.temple.edu/exhibits/show/civil-rights-in-a-northern-cit/collections/columbia-avenue-riots/who—oral-histories-for-the-co>

<http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/thats-history/71475-50-years-later-the-legacy-of-1964-riots-lingers>

<http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2014/08/28/50-years-ago-false-rumor-ignites-chaos-destruction-in-north-philly/>

<http://hiddencityphila.org/2014/08/scared-half-to-death/>

"The violence got so bad that a round-the-clock curfew was imposed."
www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/philadelphia/71956-remembering-the-1964-riots-in-north-philadelphia-photos

"The Columbia Avenue rebellion resulted in two deaths, 339 injuries, including 100 police, and the arrest of 308 people on charges ranging from curfew violations to burglary. The riot exposed the persistence of discrimination and repression faced by Black Philadelphia in spite of gains made during the Civil Rights struggle."

<https://resistancephl.com/2015/04/01/report-on-philadelphia-cops-makes-reform-recommendations/>

Sharswood Redevelopment and Gentrification

"Not long after sunrise, the Philadelphia Housing Authority demolished two high-rise towers that are part of the Norman Blumberg Apartments, a half-century old public-housing complex in the city's Sharswood sec-

tion."

<http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/philadelphia/92075-pha-demolishes-norman-blumberg-high-rise-towers-in-sharswood-video>

<http://planphilly.com/articles/2016/03/07/remaking-sharswood-taking-a-neighborhood-through-eminent-domain-in-the-name-of-transformation>

<http://aldianews.com/articles/politics/housing/pha-2015-88-units-35-million-and-dawn-sharswood/41835>

"And local activists, most notably real estate broker Judith Robinson, continue to criticize the agency for its huge land grab that, she and others assert, denied African-American property owners a chance to cash in on their investments right at the point when organic redevelopment in the neighborhood was picking up. Whether the PHA will get the money to build all of the 1,200 units of housing it took the land for remains very much an open question."

<http://www.phillymag.com/property/2016/12/30/the-top-5-real-estate-stories-of-2016/>

<http://planphilly.com/articles/2016/02/22/remaking-sharswood>

<http://www.phillymag.com/property/2016/08/15/sharswood-redevelopment-update-two-steps-forward-one-sideways/>

<http://www.phillymag.com/news/2015/03/16/sharswood-residents-philadelphia-housing-authority-choice-neighborhood-grant-deja-vu/>

<http://temple-news.com/opinion/gentrification-contributes-plunder-north-philly/>

http://www.philly.com/philly/news/breaking/20150603_On_Ridge_Avenue_progress_would_go_by_the_initials_PHA.html

<http://www.phillytrib.com/news/plans-for-new-high-school-in-north->

[philly/article_1885e1e2-cd44-5366-8112-81543712845e.html](http://philly.com/article_1885e1e2-cd44-5366-8112-81543712845e.html)

http://www.philly.com/philly/education/20161216_Philadelphia_School_District_PHA_partner_up_to_reopen_Vaux_High.html

<http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2016/12/16/school-district-sells-closed-high-school-to-buyer-not-known-for-owning-schools/>

"What makes this project different—and a source of concern to preservationists—is that PHA will also condemn at least 372 structures, including hundreds of row houses and more than two dozen commercial properties along Ridge Avenue, along with more than a thousand vacant lots spread across 40 city blocks. Although many buildings in the area are dilapidated and not "historic" in a classic sense, Sharswood remains a 19th century row home neighborhood steeped in history spanning from the city's beer-making heyday to the Jazz Age through to the Civil Rights era." <http://hiddencityphila.org/2016/02/redevelopment-in-sharswood-will-it-come-at-the-expense-of-preservation/>

<http://phlcouncil.com/council-news/work-begins-on-phas-sharswood-blumberg-transformation-in-north-philadelphia/>

http://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-search/Sharswood_Philadelphia_PA/beds-2-2

<http://crossroads.newsworks.org/index.php/local/keystone-crossroads/92696-in-philadelphia-a-discussion-about-urban-renewal-and-the-trauma-of-eminant-domain>

<http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2016/09/13/construction-underway-in-sharswood-rebuilding/>

<http://hiddencityphila.org/2016/02/breaking-through-historic-preservation-color-line/>

<http://hiddencityphila.org/2016/02/redevelopment-in-sharswood-will-it-come-at-the-expense-of-preservation/>

<http://www.phillymag.com/property/2016/08/15/sharswood-redevelopment-update-two-steps-forward-one-sideways/>

<http://www.zillow.com/sharswood-philadelphia-pa/apartments/>

http://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-search/Sharswood_Philadelphia_PA/beds-2-2

<https://spiritnews.org/articles/now-hiring-is-the-philadelphia-housing-authority-making-good-on-their-promise-to-sharswood/>

http://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-search/Sharswood_Philadelphia_PA/beds-2-2

http://www.zillow.com/homes/recently_sold/Sharswood-Philadelphia-PA/753804_rid/39.983631,-75.158823,39.968306,-75.186288_rect/14_zm/

<https://www.trulia.com/property/3255816246-2155-Ridge-Ave-Philadelphia-PA-19121>

<http://www.philasun.com/local/school-district-philadelphia-pha-unveil-innovative-college-preparatory-high-school-service-504-students/>

<https://spiritnews.org/articles/locations/sharswood/>

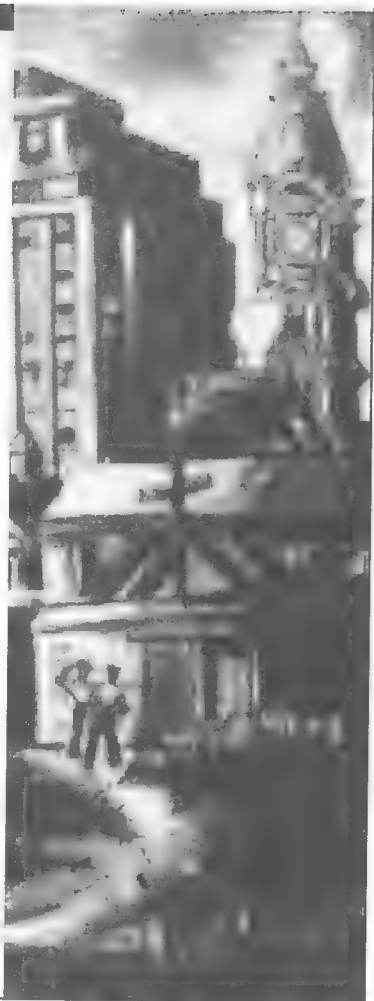
http://www.phillytrib.com/news/north-phila-project-is-pha-s-most-ambitious-in-a/article_ea65ea70-89b4-5230-87bd-e48d808852d7.html

SHARSWOOD THRASH

CONTEXT

Born in 1893 in Griffin Georgia, Dox Thrash came to Philadelphia in 1925 where he settled down and began his career as an artist. In Sharswood he found a vibrant African American cultural scene Full of artists, photographers, musicians and activists. He eventually gained wide acclaim for his innovation of a new method of printmaking known as the "Carborundum" process. But he was also known for his realistic and sympathetic portrayals of African American life. From rural life in the south to bustling cityscapes to intimate portraits his work was always responding to changing conditions around him. His work was exhibited around the country, but most notably the Pyramid Club on Girard Ave., of which he was a member. The Club served to promote the social and cultural advancement of the African American community in Philadelphia.

 DOXTHRASH.HOUSE  DOX.THRASH



PROVOCATION

Today Dox Thrash's former home on 24th & Cecil B. Moore sits vacant and at this time of great change his legacy and that of the neighborhood hangs in the balance. The purpose of Sharswood Thrash is to discover *how the legacy of Dox Thrash can be mobilized to inspire positive action in Sharswood today?*

VALUES

What values does his legacy inspire? What are yours?

TACTICS

What activities/projects/parties/gatherings can be done to further this legacy and these values?

DEEP SPACE MIND @ COMMUNITY FUTURES LAB

WORKSHEET

EXERCISE 1: Insanity's Gifts

PICK AN INSANITY OF YOURS:

WHAT DOES IS THE SPACE LIKE INSIDE THAT INSANITY? LIST
SOME STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF THIS MINDSPACE:

LOOK AROUND. WHAT GIFTS CAN YOU TAKE FROM THIS IN-
SANITY AND BRING TO THE HEALING SPACE?

LIST THEM HERE:

EXERCISE 2: Future Spatial Remembering

for strategizing personal strengths in the case of future community and political crisis

PICK A FAMILIAR SETTING, ONE YOU CAN IMAGINE
EASILY:

PICK AN FEAR YOU HAVE ABOUT YOUR
COMMUNITY / SOCIETY:

IMAGINE THAT FEAR ARRIVING AT YOUR FAMILIAR SET-
TING. HOW DO YOU KNOW IT HAS ARRIVED? WHAT DO YOU
SEE? HOW DO YOU FEEL?

LOOK AROUND YOUR FAMILIAR SETTING. WHAT IN
YOUR SETTING CAN AID YOU IN ACTION AGAINST YOUR FEAR?
WHO CAN HELP YOU? WHAT TOOLS CAN YOU IDENTIFY? WHAT
SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OR POWER DO YOU HAVE IN THIS SET-
TING THAT THE FEAR CAN'T ACCESS? HOW CAN YOUR INSANI-
TIES AID YOU?

HOW CAN YOU BEGIN TO USE THESE TOOLS IN THE PRESENT, IN
PREPARATION FOR THE FEAR?

PICK ONE OTHER PERSON TO SHARE THIS ACTIVITY
WITH:

METROPOLARITY.NET/@METROPOLARITY

HOW MIGHT THESE GIFTS BE HELPFUL TO OTHERS? HOW HAS IT SERVED YOU IN THE PAST? HOW CAN THIS GIFT BE BEST TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY OTHERS? WHAT ARE SOME WARNINGS YOU HAVE ABOUT THIS GIFT FOR OTHERS?

METROPOLARITY.NET / @METROPOLARITY

CONTRIBUTORS



Aiden Gibbs is a college student who currently resides in northeast Philadelphia. They grew up in North Philadelphia's Blumberg Projects, and draw most of their inspiration from concepts of family and home.

Arturo Castillon is a historian and food-service worker who lives in Philadelphia.

Black Quantum Futurism Collective is an interdisciplinary collaboration between Camae Ayewa (Rockers!; Moor Mother) and Rasheedah Phillips (The AfroFuturist Affair; Metropolarity) exploring the intersections of futurism, creative media, DIY-aesthetics, and activism in marginalized communities through an alternative temporal lens. BQF has created or produced a number of community-based events and projects, experimental music projects, zines, short films, and several self-published anthologies of experimental essays on space-time consciousness. In 2016, BQF founded Community Futures Lab, a community arts space in North Philadelphia. BQF is a 2018 Velocity Fund Grantee, 2018 Solitude & ZKM Web Resident, 2017 Center for Emerging Visual Artists Fellow, 2017 Pew Fellow, 2016 A Blade of Grass Fellow, and a 2015 artist-in-residence at Neighborhood Time Exchange, West Philadelphia. BQF has presented, lectured, screened, exhibited art, and/or performed at Red Bull Arts, New York; Serpentine Galleries, ICA London, MOMA PS1, Vox Populi, Bergen Kunsthall, Le Gaité Lyrique, Squeaky Wheel and more. BQF Collective

frequently collaborates with artists Joy KMT, Ras Mashramani, Alex Smith, Thomas Stanley, Bryan O. Green, D1L0 DeMille, Irreversible Entanglements, and others.

Camae Ayewa (Moor Mother) is a musician, poet, visual artist, soundscape artist, and workshop facilitator, and has performed at numerous festivals, colleges, galleries, and museums around the world, sharing the stage with King Britt, Roscoe Mitchell, Claudia Rankine, bell hooks and more. Camae is a vocalist and musician in three collaborative performance groups: Irreversible Entanglements, Moor Jewelry, and 700Bliss. As Moor Mother she released her debut album *Fetish Bones* on Don Giovanni Records in 2016, alongside her first book of poetry, *Fetish Bones*, and remixes for The Avalanches, Ghanji Sufi and others. In 2017 she released *The Motionless Present*, commissioned by The Vinyl Factory x CTM. Camae released two collaborative albums, *Spa 700* by 700bliss and *Crime Waves* by Moor Jewelry. Camae has been on numerous international tours. Recent festival performances include Borealis, Berlin Jazz Festival, Le Guess Who?, Unsound Festival, Flow Festival, Rewire and Donaufestival. She has performed at Berghain The Kennedy Center, Glastonbury, MoogFest, Carnegie Hall Pittsburgh, with performances in Brazil, Tokyo, Australia, Japan, and more. In 2018 Camae released and toured the debut collaborative self-titled album *Irreversible Entanglements*. Camae has toured with The Art Ensemble of Chicago and was featured on the 50th anniversary album, *We Are on the Edge*. Camae was featured on album *Wrecked* by Zonal and has toured with the group. In 2019 Camae released her 3rd solo album *Analog Fluids of Sonic Black Holes*. She also debuted three major performances: *The Great Bailout*, commissioned by Tusk Festival and featuring members of the London Contemporary Orchestra; her first musical *Circuit City*, commissioned by FringeArts Philadelphia, and featuring Irreversible Entanglements, Elon, and other performers; and a 4-hour memorial tribute called *Red Summer*,

commissioned by Red Bull Arts, and featuring over 20 musicians curated by Ayewa. Camae has also curated Rockers Philly, Wysing Festival and Le Guess who and more. She has recently presented workshops and talks at Cornell University, University of Pittsburgh, Harvard University and more. As a member of Black Quantum Futurism Collective, she has been a part of two literary works and several zines and sound experimental works, and has presented, exhibited and performed at The Serpentine Galleries, London; Philadelphia Art Museum; Open Engagement; MOMA PS1, New York; Bergen Kunsthall; Le Gaité Lyrique, Paris; and Squeaky Wheel, Buffalo, among others. Camae Ayewa's visual and soundscape work has been featured in the Guggenheim, ICA London, The Kitchen NYC, and more.

Dox Thrash House is located on Cecil B. Moore in Philadelphia and was home to the innovative printmaker Dox Thrash (1893-1965). Dana Rice, Andrea Haley, Maya Thomas, and Chris Mulford comprise The Dox Thrash House, an organization that seeks to preserve the artist's legacy.

Faye M. Anderson is director of All That Philly Jazz, a public history project that is mapping Philadelphia's lost jazz shrines and documenting the social history of jazz. She is founder of the Green Book Philadelphia Project.

Jason Harris is a Baltimore based futurist, educator and cultural activist. He is the founder and facilitator of the BlkRobot Project, a long term educational art effort designed to place multi-functional art of scale in predominantly Black neighborhoods. He spent 20 years working as an IT professional, and the past 18 years building his practice as a writer, futurist and artist in Baltimore City. In 2003, he co-founded the Baltimore based study group of the International Capoeira Angola Foundation, a cultural arts group that teaches and propagates the martial art Capoeira

Angola. Jason is a writer whose work has appeared in Black Enterprise magazine, Catalyst Literary journal, BmoreArt.com and various online publications. He self-published the speculative fiction anthology entitled, "Redlines: Baltimore 2028- - in 2012, and is a Kimbilio Fiction Fellow. He also runs the "SoulBot Saturday Design Squad", a S.T.E.A.M. based learning course for youth in Baltimore. He co-facilitated a "Future Cities" course at Goucher College, and has previously facilitated classes/workshops at the University of Baltimore and the University of the Bahamas. Jason currently teaches Computer Science and Technology at the Booker T. Washington Middle School for the Arts in Baltimore City.

Marcus Borton is an intergenerational native son of Philadelphia. Although underserved by the structurally violent Philadelphia school district, he has gone on to join Mumia Abu-Jamal as an alumnus of Goddard College. When he is not reaching for the coldest Day's Soda at the back of the freezer at his local papi store, he dances like the cops aren't watching his every move on the corner waiting for the next trolley. His work has been featured in online outlets, such as Racebaitr and Argot Magazine. This is his first piece of fiction published in print. He thanks you for reading.

Natalie-Claire Luwisha-Bowditch, a black female engineer currently in the United Kingdom. A rarity in her field, her individuality is something she has had to become comfortable with since her studies at the University of Salford, UK where the large majority of her classmates were male, with a high percentage of those being of white ethnicity. Having her childhood in South Africa, combined with a British upbringing during her formative years, has propelled her to have the focus and determination to succeed in life despite the bias, conscious or otherwise, of the UK society. The lesson she has learnt from a young age is the importance of telling your story. From her arrival in the UK, it was clearly apparent that notions of

Africa in the Western world are sometimes biased, fundamentally flawed, or at times even ignorant. This has been a primary source of her dedication to being a part of creating a new narrative for black society. Throughout her career, she has become an integral part of our future structures, infrastructure and physical environment. More importantly she focuses on being visible to other young, black and ethnic minority groups to serve as an inspiration to them. Through a range of speaking engagements for young people and women in STEM, she regularly presents informative and encouraging speeches at various events in educational, social and community settings. This vital role of responsibility that she has taken in both her personal and professional work, is to empower black women to follow different career paths other than the status quo. Afrofuturism; a term she acknowledged through the media and literature from the 90's. But what does it mean today, as a millennial black woman? The answers became clear at her first AfroFutures UK event. The beautiful art and literature highlighting the black experience today, as well as the inciteful presentations that followed, created an extensive view and understanding of her role in future society. She believes that the AfroFutures movement means that black people must not just be a part of the future, but actively engage in creating it! Natalie-Claire currently lives in Sheffield, UK with her husband Thomas, also a structural engineer. She enjoys maintaining a fit and healthy lifestyle, and has recently participated in the Great Manchester 10K Run. She also has a passion for personal development, inspiring women in STEM and entrepreneurship. She keeps an ongoing blog documenting these topics.

North Philly Peace Park was founded in 2012 on several vacant parcels of land directly across the street from the Blumberg Housing Projects. The founding members were a socially engaged group of Blumberg and neighborhood residents, activists, designers, organizers and educators, who formed an ecological campus that sought to collectively solve many

of the neighborhood's critical issues. The group utilized their collective resources, knowledge and skills and designed a campus that included a fence-free organic farm, an earthship-style pavilion and created after school and community programs like the Urban County Fair. In 2015, the North Philly Peace Park was displaced by PHA development plans and fought these actions aggressively from 2015-2017, resulting in a move to its current location along Jefferson street and gaining land security. From 2016- 2018 the Park has been engaged in the redevelopment process with partners from the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, student group Diverse Design, Habitat for Humanity, Haverford College and Youth Build. In 2018 the park will finalize this process with completing an off-grid facility to further complement its programs and prove a proof of concept/ model for an equitable design practice. The park has grown into a popular charitable eco campus and passive park that provides free programs to the greater Philadelphia community. It is a grassroots organization with a dedicated volunteer staff and a membership base strongly rooted in surrounding neighborhoods. The programs are supported by strategic partnerships that strengthen the four main program areas.

Quentin VerCetty is an award-winning multidisciplinary visual griot (storyteller), and arts educator who recently completed his masters degree in art education at Concordia University. Focusing his thesis on using on developing an Afrofuturism curriculum as a culturally relevant and responsive art pedagogy in underserved communities. As an artist, VerCetty work explores ideas around the Afrotopia as it relates to safe spaces for people of colour by utilizing the visual motifs of Afro-Carriban Carnival. His passions explore ideas around racial representation, public art sculptures, monuments as well as the use of semiotic and surrealism to tell meta-narratives about society and politics. Quentin's art has been featured in numerous media outlets and publications in various countries

such as Japan, Haiti, Peru, Ghana, Australia, United Arab Emirates, and France. In 2016 his mission for activism (using art as a tool for social change) led to launching the Canadian chapter of the Black Speculative Arts Movement (BSAMCanada), an organization that gives a platform for artistic engagement through partnerships, projects, as well as event and content productions. Since its conception it has continued to spread across the nation. Through his work, VerCetty hopes to engage minds, inspire hearts, and dutifully challenge others to help make the world a better place not only for today but for many tomorrows to come.

Rasheedah Phillips Esq. is a Philadelphia-based public interest attorney, advocate, artist, cultural producer, mother, and writer. Rasheedah's writing has appeared in *Keywords for Radicals*, *Villanova Law Review*, *The Funambulist Magazine*, and other publications. Rasheedah is the founder of *The AfroFuturist Affair*, a founding member of *Metropolarity Queer Spec Fic Collective*, co-founder of *Black Quantum Futurism*, and co-creator of the award-winning *Community Futures Lab*. Phillips is a recipient of the *National Housing Law Project 2017 Housing Justice Award*, *2017 City & State Pennsylvania 40 under 40 Rising Star award*, and *2018 Atlantic Fellow for Racial Equity*. She is the self-published author of *Recurrence Plot (and Other Time Travel Tales)* (2014), *Telescoping Effect, Pt. 1* (2017) and the editor of the anthologies *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory & Practice Vol. I* (2015) and *Space-Time Collapse I: From the Congo to the Carolinas* (2016).

R. L. Stanford is a long-term Philadelphia resident, social worker, and certified peer specialist whose work lifts up the expertise and power of those who have traditionally been underserved by the mental health industry, especially Black, brown, Queer, and historically wealth poor communities. She is co-founder of the youth-led housing justice collective, *Youth Healers Stand Up!* and has over a decade of experience serving

people surviving oppressive systems and institutions. In another life, she is a science-fiction writer and founder of *Deep Space Mind 215*, an healing space for health and community workers to process their own mental wellness challenges and experiment with the development of community driven mental health practices.

Soraya Jean-Louis is a Haitian born, Harlem and Brooklyn raised mixed media queer womynist artist conjuer currently living and loving in New Orleans. Her love of black womyn and families, motherhood, nature, wildcrafting, Black Feminist Futurisms, comics/graphic novels and the African Diaspora are central themes in her work. Soraya's work as an organizer, mentor, counselor, doula and medical anthropologist focusing on women's health and African folklore strengthen her commitment to resisting oppression and facilitating healing through imaginative creative/art activism. Soraya has participated in several group exhibits in various New Orleans cultural institutions including the Mckenna Museum of African American Art, The JuJu Bag, Antenna Gallery, The Jazz and Heritage Gallery and a solo show at Café Rose NiCaud. Her works have been used in zines, books and promotional materials such as *Secret Rivers : Domestic Violence Zine*, *Near Kin: A collection of Words and Art Inspired by Octavia Estelle Butler*, and the Official poster for Audre Lorde Week at Tulane. Soraya is the co-founder of Wildseeds: New Orleans Octavia Butler Emergent Strategy Collective. Wildseeds work, steeped in Black feminist traditions of survival and healing, engages Octavia Butler and other speculative/sci-fi and fantastical authors a resource for social change.

Womanist Working Collective Established in October 2015 as an affinity group on Meetup, we began gathering as a group of likeminded Black women & femmes. Responding to our almost immediate growth and increased membership, we held our first strategic planning retreat in

January 2016 and collective-wide data collection to gather vital feedback from our membership. From this survey and on-going evaluations, we began to shape and expand what was quickly evolving into an intentional Community of Practice centering livelihood and Quality of Life for Black womyn, transwomen, femmes and gender variant folks. Today, we continue building around the needs and feedback from our members to achieve our ultimate goal: Black Liberation!

Community Futures Lab Interns:

Ada "MadamData"

Ayahna Kumarroy

Cheikh "Boonie" Athj

Deja Haley

Gem tha Jawn

Geoffrey Volcovici

Joyce Hatton

Khari Jackson

Libby Bland

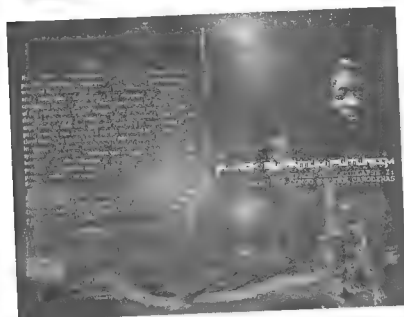
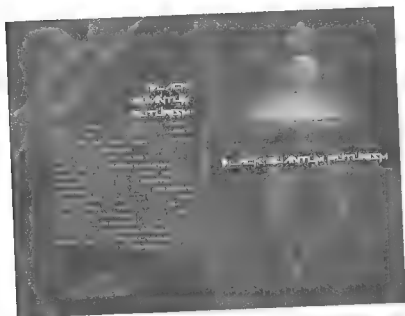
Kayla Watkins

Kiana Murphy

Rachael Meyers

Maya Arthur

Other Titles from House of Future Sciences



<https://futureslab.community>



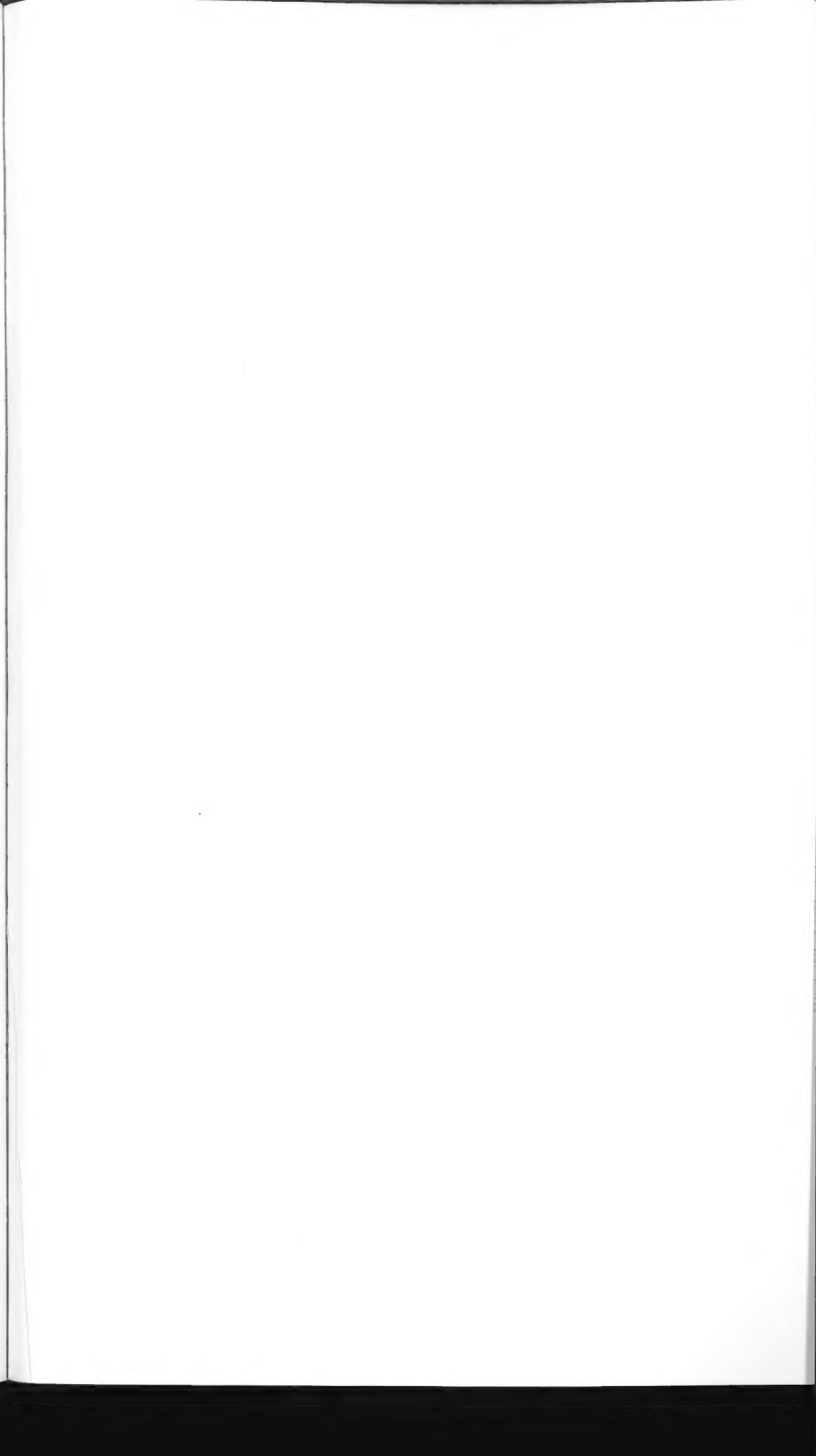






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SPACE-TIME COLLAPSE II

COMMUNITY FUTURISMS

Space-Time Collapse is an experimental writing and art/activist series in which Black Quantum Futurism— as both a praxis and a movement—imagines future(s) and recovers pasts, using experimental writing, cosmic visions, and exploratory images in Black speculative practices where ancient anti-clock time theories and practices vibrate, grow, and live. Space-Time Collapse Part II considers time, memory, and temporality as experienced by the people of the African diaspora over time and across space, while exploring how these communities create and enact alternative cultural, communal, and personal temporal-spatial frameworks. The book dreams and speaks in oral futures, witnesses spatial-temporal autonomy, and demands housing justice among other essential tools. Included in the collection is research, images, interviews, and writing from Community Futurisms: Time & Memory in North Philly, a BQF collaborative art, preservation, and creative research project exploring the impact of redevelopment, gentrification, and displacement— forces that cause activated space-time collapses within marginalized North Philadelphia communities.

Contributions from local writers and activists revive the historical memory and quantum histories and detail some of the spatial-temporal interventions and memory preservation projects happening in the neighborhood. Submissions by non-local writers and artists reflect on how the experiences of the North Philadelphia community are not unique; the affordable housing crisis, gentrification, and spatial-temporal displacement of Black and poor people are all happening in similarly-situated communities throughout the Afro-diaspora. Thus, their contributions will explore Afrofuturistic, Black speculative, and Black quantum tools for addressing these issues, speaking into existence both ancient and new visions for deconstructing old problems.



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